Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Chapter 1-5)

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PROLOGUE

In order to have fuller knowledge of things, their principles must first be sought; for then the explanation of the cause can more easily be set forth, if its origin is learned. For when we have shown the manner and logic by which the letter was given, what we say can appear true. It is therefore established that in the times of the apostles the Jews, because they were living under the Roman Empire, resided at Rome; and from among these, those who had come to believe handed down to the Romans that, while professing Christ, they should observe the Law. But the Romans, having heard the report of Christ's miracles, were ready to believe, as men of sound judgment; and not without reason were they called wise, for having been wrongly led at first, they were quickly corrected and remained firm in that course.

Therefore certain people from among the Jews, as can be understood, who believed in Christ, did not accept that God is from God, thinking Him opposed to the one God. For this reason he says they did not receive the spiritual grace of God, and therefore lacked confirmation. These are the ones who also had unsettled the Galatians, so that they turned away from the tradition of the apostles; and this is why the Apostle is angry with them, because though they had been well taught, they were easily led astray. But he ought not to have been angry with the Romans; rather, he should praise their faith, because, seeing no remarkable signs of virtues and none of the apostles, they had nevertheless embraced faith in Christ, even though according to Jewish custom, more in words than in understanding; for the mystery of the cross of Christ had not been explained to them. Therefore, when certain people arrived who believed correctly, questions arose about eating meat and not eating meat, and whether the hope that is in Christ was sufficient, or whether the Law also had to be observed.

Therefore he writes to the Romans in four ways, reasoning from the beginning about the human race in a physical manner; for they are the head of all the nations, so that in them the others and all the Gentiles may learn. The first way is that in which he shows what he is, and what he has been, and whose he is, and by this he also strikes at heresies. The second way is that in which he proves that by the rule of nature they did not subject themselves to the one God, and what shameful and base things they did to one another, and for this they were despised by God; so that believers may rejoice. The third way is that they spurned the Law that was given; therefore he sets the Jews before the Greeks. The fourth way is that he teaches that the Jews have strayed from the Law and the promise of God concerning Christ, and have been made like the Gentiles; so that both alike need the mercy of God, hoping for salvation not through the Law, but through faith in Christ Jesus.

Therefore it is from here that, with every effort, he strives to remove them from the Law; because “the Law and the prophets were until John” (Luke 16:16); and to establish them solely in faith in Christ, and, as if against the Law, he claims the Gospel, not destroying the Law, but preferring Christianity. For he asserts that Christ was promised in such a way that, once He was preached, the Law would cease, not entirely, because a shortening of the Law has taken place, which would give salvation in a concise form; for many things were handed down to the ancients on account of the hardness of their hearts, so as to be a burden, which the mercy of God has shortened through Christ by granting forgiveness of past sins. He is therefore ungrateful to the mercy of God who wishes to remain under the Law; for Moses had said: “Therefore in fear you shall act for the sons of Israel” (Lev. 15:31); so that wherever they turned, they would have the Law, and therefore never be entirely without anxiety. Therefore, in order to teach that in Christ,

apart from the Law, hope of life and salvation is to be placed, and to show that the Lord Himself is over all, he begins therefore:

Chapter 1

Romans 1:1a ***Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus.***

Among our ancestors names were assigned with a reason, as Isaac was named because of laughter, and Jacob because of the heel; so this man too was called Saul on account of restlessness. But after he believed, he calls himself Paul instead of Saul, that is, changed. And since Saul, according to the sense mentioned above, is interpreted as restlessness or temptation, when he came to faith in Christ, he calls himself Paul, that is, as if from a tempter he had become one who is at rest, humble, or small; for our faith is peace. For previously he brought temptations upon the servants of God out of the restlessness of Judaism, but afterwards he himself suffered temptations because of the hope which earlier, out of love for Judaism, he had denied.

By declaring himself *a servant of Christ Jesus*, Paul shows that he is freed from the Law. And therefore he put both, that is, "Jesus Christ," so that he might mark the person of both God and man: because in both He is Lord, just as the apostle Peter bears witness, saying: "This is," he says, "the Lord of all." (Acts 10:36) Since therefore He is both Lord and God, as David says: "For the Lord Himself is God" (Ps. 99:3); which heresies deny. For to Marcion, out of hatred for the Law, it seems right to deny Christ and His body, and to confess Jesus; but to the Jews and to Photinus, because of their zeal for the Law, to deny that Jesus is God. For whenever he says either "Jesus" or "Christ," he sometimes signifies God, sometimes man, as in this passage among others: "And one," he says, "Lord Jesus, through whom are all things" (1 Cor. 8:6), which certainly refers to the Son of God, inasmuch as

He is God. And in another place: “But Jesus,” he says, “advanced in age and wisdom” (Luke 2:52), which certainly belongs to man.

Romans 1:1b ***Called as an apostle.***

Because of this he has come to know God and confesses Him, having been made a fitting servant; he shows that he has been elevated by saying: “Called as an apostle,” that is, sent by the Lord to conduct His affairs. By this Paul shows that he has favor with God, since he serves not the Law but Christ; for the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath (Matt. 12:8).

Romans 1:1c ***Set apart for the Gospel of God.***

The Gospel of God is the good news of God, by which sinners are called to forgiveness. But the Apostle, since in Judaism he held the position of teacher, as a Pharisee, therefore says that he has been set apart from the preaching of Judaism for the Gospel of God, so that, turning away from the Law, he might proclaim Christ, who, in what the Law could not do, would justify those who believe in him. Yet he is not against the Law, but for the Law; for it itself foretells this, as the prophet Isaiah says: “There shall come from Zion one who will rescue and turn away captivity from Jacob; and this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” (Isa. 59:20–21)

Therefore, if the Law of God was given through Moses, and the preaching is of the new Law of God, what is it that makes the difference, so that one can say he has been transferred from the Law which God gave into the Gospel of God? It is like this, as when someone moves from the second rank to the first, and from what is good to what is better. For the Law was given by God for the correction of conduct; but the Gospel of God is that through

which the mystery of God is revealed, which lay hidden for ages in God: that mystery is Christ. To this all who are invited receive a double gift; for they receive the remission of sins, and become children of God, so that they can no longer die the second death. Therefore it is that the Lord says in the Gospel: This is, he says, eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (Jn. 17:3).

Romans 1:2a ***What He had previously promised.***

In order to prove that the hope of faith is firm and complete in Christ, Paul first says that His Gospel was previously promised by God; and, to show from this that He is a suitable guarantor of life, he points out that, before He came, testimony was given to Him, with Peter the Apostle bearing similar witness: "For there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Romans 1:2b ***Through his prophets.***

In order to make it more evident that the coming of Christ would be saving, Paul also pointed out the persons through whom he sealed the promise, so that from them it might be seen how true and magnificent the promise is. For no one announces a worthless thing with great heralds.

Romans 1:2c ***In the Holy Scriptures.***

Paul added this to complete his true declaration, so that he might inspire greater confidence in believers and commend the Law; for the Scriptures are holy, and they condemn vices; and there is contained therein the mystery of the one God and of the

incarnation of the Son of God for human salvation, with the signs of wonders as witnesses.

<u>Romans 1:3a</u> ***Concerning His Son.***

It was fitting that, since God was promising His own Son to the world, He should promise Him through distinguished men, so that from them it might be known how mighty He was who was being proclaimed, so that He might insert in the Holy Scriptures that His coming was to take place, and so that what was proclaimed by the saints in the Scriptures could not appear false.

<u>Romans 1:3b</u> ***Who was made for him from the seed of David according to the flesh.***

He, who was the Son of God according to the Holy Spirit, that is, according to God (for God is spirit, and is without doubt holy), says that he was made according to the flesh the Son of God from the seed of David, according to that: "And the Word was made flesh" (Jn. 1:14); so that Christ Jesus may now be one Son of God and of man, so that just as he is true God, he might also be true man; but he will not be true unless he is of flesh and soul, so that he may be perfect. For he, who from eternity was the Son of God, was unknown to the creature; but when he willed to be revealed for human salvation, he had to become visible and corporeal; because he also willed to be known by his power, and to cleanse man from sins in the flesh, with death overcome. And therefore he is made from the seed of David, so that just as he was born as king from God before the ages, so also according to the flesh he might receive royal origin from a king, made by the work of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin, that is, born; so that, with reverence reserved for him, he might from this be known as more than man; because he differed from the nativity under human law, just as it

had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb" (Isa. 7:14), so that when what was new should appear and worthy of praise, a certain providence of God concerning the visitation of the human race to come might be recognized.

<u>Romans 1:4</u> ***Who was predestined to be the Son of God in power according to the spirit of sanctification by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

By saying "Son of God," Paul signified the Father as God; but by adding "spirit of sanctification," he showed the mystery of the Trinity. Therefore, this one who was incarnate had his true nature hidden; then he was predestined, according to the spirit of sanctification in power, to be revealed as the Son of God when he rose from the dead, as it is written in the eighty-fourth Psalm: "Truth has sprung out of the earth" (Ps. 84:12). For all uncertainty and doubt were trampled down and crushed by his resurrection; indeed, while he was still on the cross, the centurion, seeing the mighty works, confessed him to be the Son of God (Matt. 27:54). For even the disciples doubted at his death, as Cleopas said in Emmaus: "We were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). And the Lord himself says: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he" (Jn. 8:28); and again: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myself" (Jn. 12:32), that is, then I shall be known as the Lord of all. Moreover, he did not say "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," but "by the resurrection of the dead," because the resurrection of Christ grants a universal resurrection. For this seems the greater power and victory in Christ: that, dead, he should act by the same power with which he had acted while living. By doing this he showed that he had mocked death, in order to redeem us; and for this reason he calls him our Lord.

Romans 1:5 ***Through whom we have received grace and apostleship, to bring about obedience to the faith among all nations for his name.***

After the resurrection, the Son of God was revealed in power, gave grace, justified sinners, and appointed apostles, of whom Paul here calls himself a companion; so that apostleship together with grace might be a gift of God, not like the apostles of the Jews. From God the Father, therefore, through Christ the Lord, they received this authority, so that in the place of the Lord, by miracles, they might make the Lord's teaching acceptable; so that the power which the faithless Jews were jealous of in the Savior, seeing this admired by the crowds in his servants, they might be tormented all the more fiercely. For power is the witness of doctrine, so that, because what is preached is incredible to the world, by deeds it might become believable. He therefore calls the apostles "those who are sent," that they might preach faith to all nations, that they might obey and be saved; so that the gift of God might be seen as granted not now to the Jews alone, but also to all nations: and that this is the will of God, that in Christ and through Christ he may have mercy on all, with his vicars preaching, that is: For his name; as he says elsewhere: For whom we act as ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20).

Romans 1:6 ***Among whom you also are called to belong to Jesus Christ.***

That is, as we carry out our mission among all the nations for the name of Jesus Christ, you too are among them and called; because the gift of God has been sent to all, so that when they hear that they are called among the others, they may know that they ought not to live under the Law, since the other nations have received the law of Christ without the law of Moses.

Romans 1:7a ***To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.***

Although Paul writes to the Romans, he indicates that he is writing to those who are in the love of God. Who are these, if not those who think rightly about the Son of God? These are the saints, and they are called so; for those who act under the Law misunderstand Christ: and they do injury to God the Father when they doubt whether in Christ there is the perfect hope of salvation. Therefore they are not saints, nor are they called.

Romans 1:7b ***Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Paul says that grace and peace belong to those who believe rightly. It is grace, because they have been absolved from sins; it is peace, because, having been enemies, they have been reconciled to the Creator, as the Lord says: Into whatever house you enter and they receive you, say: Peace to this house (Luke 10:5). And, in order to teach that without Christ there is no peace and no hope, he added that grace and peace are not only from God the Father, but also from Christ Jesus. He calls God "our Father" because of origin, since all things are from Him; but Christ "Lord," because, redeemed by His blood, we have been made children of God.

Romans 1:8 ***First of all, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.***

With the preface concluded, Paul declares that before anything else his joy consists in this, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, that while the Romans were ruling the world, they submitted

themselves to the Christian faith, which seems lowly and foolish to the wise of this age. Therefore, although there were many things in the Romans that could cause him joy (for they were notable in learning and eager for good works, more zealous in doing well than in speaking, which is not far from divine religion), yet he says that this is the first thing in which he rejoices: that their faith was running forth in every place. And although it was not yet in full accord with the rule of truth handed down by its authors, still, because they had begun to venerate what comes from the one God, raising the name of Christ, he rejoices, knowing that they are able to make progress. By this he also shows his love toward them, since he shares in joy over the good they have begun and urges them on toward further growth.

He therefore says that he gives thanks only to his God, because they did not yet fully belong to him; for from Him is every fatherhood (Eph. 3:15). But since every ordering of our salvation is indeed from God, yet through Christ, not through the Law nor through any prophet, he says that he gives thanks to God, but through Christ, because the fame of their faith had been an advancement for many; so that he might attribute this very fact to God's providence through Christ. For either those who had believed rejoiced, being strengthened; or the others, because they saw their leaders converted; or at least those who had not believed could be brought to faith by their example. For one in a lower position easily does what he sees the one above him doing.

> **<u>Romans 1:9a</u>** ***For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I always make mention of you in my prayers.***

In order to mention love, Paul calls upon God as witness, whom he serves and to whom he also offers prayer on their behalf, serving not in the Law but in the Gospel of His Son; that is, not in

what Moses the servant delivered, but in what the beloved Son taught. For as far as the servant is from the master, so far is the Gospel from the Law: not because the Law is evil, but because the Gospel is better. Therefore he serves God in the Gospel of His Son, so as to show that it is God's will that people believe in Christ.

Romans 1:9b ***Whom do I also serve.***

How? In my spirit, Paul says, not in man-made circumcision, nor in new moons, and the sabbath, and distinctions of foods; but in spirit, that is, in the mind. Since God is spirit, He ought rather to be served in spirit or in soul; for whoever serves Him in soul, serves Him by faith. This also the Lord said to the Samaritan woman, who thought that God wished to be worshiped on the mountain, saying: The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeks such as those who will worship Him. God is spirit (Jn. 4:23–24). Therefore, those who worship must worship in spirit and in truth; and it is not the place that praises prayer, but the devout soul. This is to worship in truth in spirit the God who is spirit, and Christ, the one from whom are all things, and the one through whom are all things (1 Cor. 8:6). These worshipers the Father seeks. He therefore asks that they be mindful of him in their prayers, so that he may sow love in them; for he creates in them the desire for himself. For who would not love him whom he hears is mindful of him? For if from those who had not been sent they had gladly received teaching under the name of Christ, with impure words; how much more would they desire to hear from him whom they knew to be an apostle, and whose words were accompanied by power!

Romans 1:10 ***Praying that somehow at last I may have a successful journey to come to you, in accordance with the will of God.***

Paul shows the sense of his prayer for them; for he says that he asks God that he might come to the city for their improvement, with the will of God, whose gift he proclaims. For progress is present only if what must be done is done with the will of God. He therefore prays that for whatever reason an opportunity might now be given for him to come to the city, because he was occupied with preaching to others; therefore he considers it a successful journey if he comes, God willing, because the will of God is provident. A successful journey, then, is to undergo the labor of travel not in vain. This he asks that God may fulfill, by calling them to His grace. He speaks with eagerness of soul; for he desires them, knowing that it benefits both them and himself, as he says elsewhere: What is our joy and crown? Is it not you in the presence of the Lord's coming? (1 Thess. 2:19). For the Apostle's fruit is richer if he gains many. Likewise, there is greater joy if the powerful of this world are converted to God, because the more tough the enemies are, the more necessary they are when reconciled. Therefore an occasion was given to his will in such a way that he was compelled to appeal to Caesar and was sent for another reason to the city of Rome, by God's will, so that he might fulfill the purpose of his will. Finally, when he was in shipwreck, the Lord stood by him, saying: Do not be afraid, Paul; for as you have borne witness about me in Jerusalem, so you must also in Rome (Acts 27:24).

Romans 1:11 ***For I desire to see you, that I may impart to you spiritual grace for the strengthening of you.***

This confirmation requires three persons: God who gives assent, the Apostle who administers, and the people who receive. Now

therefore Paul shows the will of his desire, what his wish concerning them was; for when he says, that I may impart to you spiritual grace, he indicates that they had acquired a carnal understanding; because under the name of Christ they had not achieved to what Christ had taught, but to those things that had been handed down by the Jews. But he himself wishes to come quickly, so that he may draw them away from this tradition and deliver to them the spiritual gift, that he may win them for God, making them sharers of spiritual grace, so that in their profession and faith they may be perfect.

From this it is understood that he did not previously praise their faith, but rather their readiness and devotion toward Christ; for, although they professed themselves to be Christians, they were living straightforwardly under the Law, just as it had been handed down to them. For the mercy of God was given for this very purpose, that the Law should come to an end, as I have often said already; because God, considering human weakness, resolved to save the human race by adding faith alone to the natural law.

What is the reason, then, that although he corrects them by his writings and draws them away from a carnal understanding, he still says his presence is necessary so that he might minister spiritual grace to them, when what he writes is itself spiritual? Unless it is for this reason, that words, when spoken, are often twisted to mean something else, as the heretics do? Therefore he longs to be present, so that he may hand on the doctrine of the Gospel with the same sense in which he writes, lest under the authority of his letters error should not be removed but rather strengthened. For when present he can persuade by his power what he could not persuade by words, so that, when he is with them, they may make greater progress.

Romans 1:12 ***That is, to be mutually comforted among you by that which is shared between us, your faith and mine.***

Paul says he is comforted with them if they grasp spiritual things; for although he rejoices in their faith, he is nevertheless pained because they were not receiving the true faith. The Apostle was of such a disposition that he grieved over the faults of others as if they were his own. And therefore, he says, let us be comforted by one and the same faith, so that there may be one comfort if they are made to be of one faith in Christ; in order that the ministry of spiritual grace, through the Apostle's preaching of the Gospel, might produce this effect.

Romans 1:13a ***I do not think, however, that you are unaware, brothers, that I have often planned to come to you, and have been prevented up to now.***

Paul shows his intention and desire, which he does not doubt they know through those brothers who, from Jerusalem or the neighboring cities, came to Rome for the sake of their religion, like Aquila and Priscilla, who made his desire known to the Romans. For since he often wished to come and was prevented, it came about that he wrote the letter, so that, being held for a long time in harmful practice, they would not be easily corrected. And he calls them brothers not only because they had been reborn, but also because among them there were, though few, those who thought rightly. Therefore he said: "Called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7). But what does "called to be saints" mean? For if they are already saints, how are they called in order to be sanctified? But this belongs to God's foreknowledge, because those whom God knows will be saints, are already saints in his sight, and remain called.

Yet he says he was forbidden until the time the letter was written, by God of course, who, knowing that they were still unprepared, directed the Apostle to other cities that were already capable of receiving the truth; even though they acted under the name of the Savior, they were kept back by carnal vices, so that they were not yet worthy to learn spiritual things. Indeed, when they wished at one time to go into Bithynia, Paul and Silas were prevented by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:7): why, if not because He knew that the right disposition was still lacking? But at Corinth the Apostle is warned, with the Lord saying: "Speak, do not be silent; for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9–10). Therefore he does not say he was forbidden without reason, but he both distinguished the causes of the delays and urged them to prepare themselves; so that, hearing that spiritual grace was going to be ministered to them, they might make themselves worthy to receive it, abstaining from carnal vices.

Romans 1:13b ***That I may have some fruit among you also, just as among the other nations.***

Paul declares that he is eager to come to them for the common benefit, so that they too may obtain the salvation of spiritual grace, having their profession of faith confirmed; so that he may have fruit with God from his ministry, through which he urges them toward true faith by the example of the other nations: for a person becomes more ready for the matter entrusted to him if he sees that many agree with it.

Romans 1:14 ***I am a debtor to Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and the foolish.***

Paul calls himself a debtor to those whom he mentions, because he was sent for this purpose, to preach to all; by this he also

signifies that all are debtors, for to confess God the Creator, from whom are all things and through whom are all things, is both a due honor and the salvation of the one who confesses. By “Greeks” he means the Gentiles, but those who are called Romans either by birth or by adoption; by “barbarians” he means those who are not Romans, whose race is opposed, and they are Gentiles. He calls “wise” those who, instructed in worldly reasoning, are called wise in this age, whether they are observers of the stars, or devoted to measurements, or numbers, or the art of grammar, rhetoric, or music. To all these he shows that none of these things profits, nor are they truly wise, unless they believe in Christ. He calls “fools” those who, following simplicity, are unskilled in these matters. To all of these he bears witness that he has been sent to preach. But he is silent about the Jews, because he is the teacher of the Gentiles. And therefore he declares himself a debtor, because he has received doctrine for this purpose, that he might hand it on; and when he hands it on, he gains.

Romans 1:15 ***Therefore, as far as it depends on me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome.***

Although Paul says that he has been sent to proclaim it to all the nations, he nevertheless declares himself ready to deliver to the Romans the Gospel of the grace of God, among whom is the head and seat of the Roman Empire. For it relates to the use or rest of the limbs if the head is not restless. Therefore he desires the peace of the Romans, so that Satan may not boost himself too much, and that he may have richer fruits from his work.

Romans 1:16a ***For I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes.***

With this statement he touches those from whom they had received a faith that was not correct, yet the power of the apostles' teaching praised it; so that, because what was being preached seemed incredible, the signs and wonders worked by the apostles might serve as testimony, that there should be no doubting of the things spoken by those in whom such power resided (for no one doubts that words yield to power, and therefore, since no miracles were seen in them, their preaching was without the power of God); and therefore he says that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of God, but that they are ashamed, because what they had handed down came under reproach, was supported by no testimony anywhere, and was at odds with apostolic doctrine. It is therefore the power of God that calls to faith and grants salvation to every believer, while it forgives sins and justifies; so that the one marked with the mystery of the cross cannot be held by the second death. For the preaching of the cross of Christ is proof that death has been conquered, as the apostle John says: "For this purpose the Son of God came, that he might destroy the works of the Devil" (1 Jn. 3:9), so that everyone who believes is not held by death, because he bears the sign that death has been overcome.

Romans 1:16b ***First to the Jew, and to the Greek.***

That is, to the one who is of the race of Abraham, and to the one who is of the nations; for in Greek it means a gentile, but in Jew it means one who is of the race of Abraham. For they began to be called Jews from the time of Judas Maccabeus, who, in the time of disaster, stood firm against the sacrileges of the nations, and with trust in God gathered the people and defended his own race. He was, likewise, of the sons of Aaron. Although therefore he gives precedence to the Jew because of the Fathers, he likewise says that he too needs the gift of the Gospel of Christ. If therefore

even the Jew is not justified except through faith in Christ Jesus, what is the point of being under the Law?

<u>Romans 1:17a</u> ***For the righteousness of God is revealed in it from faith to faith.***

Paul says this because in the one who believes, whether he is a Jew or a Greek, the righteousness of God is revealed (Hab. 2:4). He calls it *the righteousness of God* because He freely justifies the ungodly through faith, without the works of the Law, as he says elsewhere: "That I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the Law, but that which is through faith" (Philip. 3:9). The righteousness that is from God in faith, this very righteousness he says is revealed in the Gospel, while He grants to a person the faith by which he may be justified. For the truth and righteousness of God are shown in him, as he believes and confesses: it is the righteousness of God, because what He promised, He has given. Therefore, by believing that he has obtained what God had promised through His prophets, he proves that God is just and is a witness to His righteousness.

From faith to faith. What else does "from faith to faith" mean, except that there is the faith of God in what He has promised about Himself, and the faith of man, who believes the One who promises, so that from the faith of God who promises to the faith of the man who believes, the righteousness of God may be revealed? For in the believer, God appears righteous; but in the one who does not believe, He seems unrighteous, for he denies that God is truthful, who does not believe that God has given what He promised. This is spoken against the Jews, who deny that this is the Christ whom God has promised.

<u>Romans 1:17b</u> ***As it is written: "But the righteous man lives by faith"*** (Hab. 2:4).

Therefore Paul turns to the example of the prophet Habakkuk, so that he may show that it was formerly revealed that the righteous man lives by faith, not by the Law; that is, that a man is not justified before God through the Law, but through faith. For the life that is from faith is not this present life, but the future one; because the righteous man lives by faith, but before God.

<u>Romans 1:18</u> ***For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men who hold down the truth of God in unrighteousness.***

For just as in the one who believes the righteousness of God is revealed, as I mentioned above, so also in the one who does not believe ungodliness and injustice are revealed. From the very structure of heaven God appears to be angry with them; for this is why He fashioned such beautiful stars, so that from them it might be recognized how great and how wonderful their creator is, and that He alone should be worshiped. Therefore it is written in the Psalm: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands (Ps. 18:2). By the natural law, therefore, the human race is made guilty; for they could have grasped, through the law of nature and the witness of the world's structure, that God alone, the author, is to be loved, which Moses handed down in writing (Deut. 6:5): but they became godless by not worshiping the Creator, and injustice appears in them, since, seeing, they turn away from the truth, not acknowledging one God.

<u>Romans 1:19a</u> ***For what is known of God is revealed in them.***

The knowledge of God is made clear from the fabric of the world; for in order that God, who is by nature invisible, might also be known through visible things, a work was made by Him which, by its visibility, would reveal its maker, so that through what is certain yet uncertain He might be known; and from this, that which is impossible for all others, He would be believed to be the God of all, who made this work.

Romans 1:19b ***For God revealed Himself to them;***

That is, He accomplished a work through which He can be recognized by faith.

Romans 1:20a ***For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood through the things that have been made.***

It is the same meaning that he repeats, so that he may teach more clearly that, since the power and majesty of God cannot be seen by the eyes of creatures in themselves, they are seen, understood, through the work of the world. By this means, therefore, he makes those who lived without the law, both of nature and of Moses, guilty; for by the habit of sinning they have buried the law of nature and forgotten its memory, and they were unwilling to receive the law that had been given for improvement, so that they might become accountable to condemnation in a double way.

Romans 1:20b ***His eternal power and divinity also, so that they are without excuse.***

In order that wickedness might in no way be able to be excused, he added also that the power of God and his eternal divinity are

known by human beings, and that they have been dulled by a certain lethargy when it comes to honoring God, whose existence and activity for their benefit they did not ignore; for it is beyond doubt that he himself has decreed the things that are produced for human use as the year unfolds. His eternal power, therefore, is Christ, through whom he established things that did not exist, and they remain in him. And even if his person has not long been recognized, his works are nevertheless clear: his divinity, moreover, because in the work decreed by him the elements of created things endure.

So that they are without excuse. For in many ways one who is found guilty cannot be excused.

Romans 1:21a ***For although they had known God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor give thanks.***

To such a degree did they not ignore Him that they confessed there is one principle from which all things have received their beginning, things heavenly, earthly, and hellish, and that this one is He who has ordained for all things their properties and offices according to nature; and knowing this, they did not give thanks. Paul speaks of those who came before, in order to correct those present and those to come.

Romans 1:21b ***But they vanished in their own thoughts.***

They vanished; for seeing the world adorned in wondrous fashion, arranged by him whom they had recognized as its Maker, they pretended not to know him.

Romans 1:21c ***And their foolish heart was darkened.***

<u>Romans 1:22</u> ***A mist of error covered their heart, because when, from the beautiful things he had made, they ought to have honored the Creator all the more, they became dull, and, leaving him, claimed that these things alone, which are seen, were sufficient for their worship.***

For in claiming to be wise, they became fools. For they consider themselves wise because they think they have investigated physical causes, examining the courses of the stars and the qualities of the elements, yet they scorn the Lord of these things; therefore they are fools. For if these things are worthy of praise, how much more the Creator of them! Yet, having suffered shame, they make a wretched excuse for having neglected God, saying that through these things they can go to God, just as one reaches the king through his companions. Come now, is anyone so senseless, or so forgetful of his own salvation, that he gives the honor due to the king to a companion? For in such a matter, if any are even found to attempt it, they are rightly condemned as guilty of treason against majesty. And these men do not think themselves guilty, who bestow the honor of God's name upon a creature, and, abandoning the Lord, worship their fellow-servants, as though something greater were reserved for God. For it is precisely for this reason that one approaches a king through tribunes or companions: because the king is merely a man, and does not know to whom he ought to entrust the commonwealth. But with God, whom nothing at all escapes (for He knows the wages of all), there is no need of an advocate to gain His favor, but of a devout mind. For wherever such a person has spoken to Him, He will answer him.

<u>Romans 1:23a</u> ***And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man.***

Therefore their heart was darkened, so that the majesty of the invisible God, whom they had recognized from these works, they transformed not into men, but, what is worse, and an inexcusable crime, into the likeness of men; so that the form of corruptible man is called God by them, that is, the image of man: so that those whom they do not dare to honor with this name while alive, they receive the images of the dead into the glory of God. What dullness, what foolishness, to call such men wise unto their own condemnation, among whom an image has more power than truth, and the dead are preferred to the living! For, turning away from the living God, they favor the dead, among whose number they themselves are, as it is written in the wisdom of Solomon: A mortal fashions a dead thing with wicked hands (Wis. 15:27).

Romans 1:23b ***And of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of serpents.***

Over these subjected things he heaped up punishment of dullness, so that they might be beyond foolishness and vanity of that kind. For in this way they diminished the majesty and glory of God, that they gave honor of the likeness of God to those things which are the least and smallest; for the first Babylonians called God the image of Bel, a certain man once dead, who is said to have ruled over them. They also worshipped a serpent, a dragon, which Daniel, the man of God, killed (Dan. 14:26), whose likeness they have. But the Egyptians worshipped a four-footed animal, which they called Apis, in the likeness of a cow; an evil that Jeroboam imitated (2 Kings 12:28), setting up cows in Samaria, for the Jews to sacrifice to; and birds, because the pagans held the raven as sacred. Yet of all these things that I have mentioned, the Egyptians worshipped images, and others which there is now no need to speak of. These things were done by those who considered themselves wise in the world; for, acknowledging the invisible

God, yet not honoring him by doing these things, they could not be wise even in those things which are visible. For it is difficult that one wise in greater things should not be wise in lesser things.

<u>Romans 1:24</u> ***For this reason God handed them over to the desires of their hearts, to impurity, so that they might treat their bodies with dishonor among themselves.***

For, Paul says, because they deified the inventions and likenesses of things to the injury of God their Creator, they were handed over to be mocked; and they were handed over not so that they would do what they did not want, but so that they would carry out what they desired. And here is the goodness of God; for although it would have been fitting to subject them so that they would do what they did not want and be tormented, because even a good thing, if done against the will, is bitter and evil. But these, turning away from God, were handed over to the Devil. Now to hand over is to permit, not to incite or to send in; so that the things they had perceived in their desires, aided by the Devil, they might carry out in action: for they could not have such a good thought.

Therefore they are given over to uncleanness, so that they may inflict *dishonor* upon *their bodies* within *themselves*. When he recalls past events, he also points to the evils of the present time; for they are still handed over now, so that they may subject their bodies to disgrace. For from that origin even to the present there are people who are said to dishonor their bodies among one another. When the soul's thought is criminal, the bodies are said to be dishonored; why else, if not because the stain on the body is a sign of the soul's sin? For when the body is defiled, no one doubts that the sin belongs to the soul.

<u>Romans 1:25</u> ***They have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and have worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.***

They have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, that is, they have given the name of God, who is true, to those who are not gods. For in the case of stones and wood, or other metals, taking away what they are, they give to them what they are not, and this is to change what is true into what is false. For they are no longer called stone or wood, but God: this is to serve the creature rather than the Creator. For they do not deny God, but they serve the creature: by this they are not excused, but rather more strongly accused; because, though they know, they do not honor God.

Who is blessed forever. Amen; that is, true. But God says: blessed forever; because God remains; whereas to the gods of the nations He grants honor for a time of wickedness; therefore it is not true. But in God truth abides. He assigns this blessing in another place to the Son of God, saying among other things: And from whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen (Rom. 9:5). Either both statements refer to Christ; or He said the same of the Son as of the Father.

<u>Romans 1:26</u> ***Therefore God handed them over to shameful passions. For their women exchanged natural use for that use which is against nature.***

This bears witness that these things came upon the human race from an angry God on account of idolatry, so that a woman, with disgraceful desire, would seek another woman for use. Some interpret this differently, not perceiving the force of the statement. For what is it to exchange natural use for that use which is against nature, if not, with the granted use taken away, to use things otherwise, so that one and the same part of each person's body, in

relation to the opposite sex, offers itself for use in a way different from that which has been granted? For if it is that part of the body which they suppose, how did they alter the use of nature, since they do not have such a use given by nature? Above Paul had already said that they were given up to uncleanness, yet he had not shown the specific quality of the deed of uncleanness itself, which he now sets forth.

<u>Romans 1:27a</u> ***Similarly, the males too, abandoning the natural use of the female, burned in their desires for one another, males with males committing indecency.***

Now Paul has made clear how what he said above about women ought to be understood. When he then added, "Similarly the males," saying that they burned in desire for one another, he has openly shown the sin of the women. Indeed, he did not say about the men that they changed the natural use among themselves, because such a use has not been granted to this sex, but to females. And what is surprising about this, since even today such women are found, so that just as that was invented by men, so this too has been discovered by women? Indeed, women accuse one another among themselves, and men likewise; it is therefore clear that those who have already changed the truth of God into a lie have also changed natural use into that use by which they are dishonored, becoming guilty of the second death. Since Satan cannot give another law, for he has nothing, he turns what is permitted and lawful into another order, so that when things are done differently than they were granted, they become sin.

<u>Romans 1:27b</u> ***And they receive within themselves, as the recompense for their wage which was fitting, the reward of their own error.***

Paul calls this recompense the contempt of God, that is, disgrace and defilement; for this is the primary cause of this sin. For what is worse, what more depraved than this sin? For as idolatry is a thoroughly destructive and most grave offense, so also its recompense is dreadful, and a most filthy suffering.

Romans 1:28 ***And just as they did not see fit to keep God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a corrupted mind, so that they might do the things that are not right.***

Because of the errors of idols they were handed over to shameful acts with one another, as has already been said. And since they considered these things to go unpunished, judging God to be unconcerned and therefore to be disregarded, it was added that, being ever more and more dulled, they became readier to commit all kinds of evil, so that, for deeds which they did not doubt displeased men, they believed God would not exact vengeance. Now he lists all the evils that were added to them, so that, therefore converted to natural understanding, they might realize that, with God angered, these things had come upon them.

Romans 1:29-30 Paul says, ***filled with all iniquity.*** Here he has spoken briefly, and then he adds the parts of iniquity: ***wickedness, fornication,*** he says, ***greed, baseness, full of envy, murders, strife, deceit, hatred, whisperers, slanderers, hateful to God, insolent, proud, arrogant, inventors of evil.***

He called *hatred* the head of *iniquity*, and placed *fornication* and *greed* as its work. This fornication includes adultery as well; for if he had said "adultery," he would seem to have excused fornication, as in Roman laws: therefore he named what is less, so that what is greater could not be believed to go unpunished.

Then he added: *wickedness*, whose disposition produces envy and murders, strife and deceit. After this he added: hatred, which gives rise to whisperings and slanders; and since these things cannot fail to displease God, he says: *hateful to God*; and because they are not pleasing to men either, he calls them *proud, arrogant*, overbearing, *inventors*, that is, authors, *of evil*. Evil, therefore, is not always the same thing. But these people, having become imitators of their father the Devil, discovered the evil of idolatry, through which all vices in the world have been born, and the greatest ruin. For the Devil, whom Scripture testifies to have sinned from the beginning (1 Jn. 3:8), although he strives after tyrannical presumption, has not yet dared to declare openly: I am God. Indeed, among other things he said to the Lord: All these things have been handed over to me (Luke 4:6); he does not say: They are from me; or: They are mine. And in the book of Job he asks that power be given to him (Job 1:12). Therefore those are worse who attribute divinity not only to the elements, but also to mere inventions.

Romans 1:31 ***Disobedient to parents.***

To what disrespect they have come, that they do not even acknowledge their parents, from whom they received their origin at birth, nor rejoice that they were born; yet they despise those through whom they began to exist! This is to ***be without understanding, without love***, yet without the love of God; for there was in them only the love of the flesh. These, knowing the justice of God through the law of nature (for they knew that these things displease God, but were unwilling to take them to heart: "For those who do such things are worthy of death"), have come to know the justice of God to such a degree that they do not deny that all these things they do deserve punishment and death. And

not only those who do them, but also those who consent to those who do them. For consent is participation.

> **<u>Romans 1:32</u>** ***Who, though they had known the justice of God, did not understand that those who do such things are worthy of death; and not only do they commit them, but also consent to those who do them.***

All these evils are the body of sins, to whose power they have been made slaves, so that they commit deeds that deserve punishment. For the cause of these evils began among the Sodomites with an offense against God, as was said above, and it has stretched out its branches into almost every part of the world, announcing the wrath of God on account of idolatry, which is the first part of error and wickedness that He condemns first; so that when this has been corrected, the vices of morals may easily be set right as well. For when the seed of hatred has been removed, the fruits of wickedness will wither; for a tree does not bear fruit whose roots have been cut off. And for this reason Moses also (Gen. 19:24 and following) recalled the deeds of Sodom and Gomorrah and did not keep silent about their destruction, so that he might instill fear of this sin to be avoided. Therefore this vice and defilement of a dishonored life is not admitted by one who in his soul thinks upon God.

There are some who do not consider themselves guilty if they do not themselves do what is evil, yet agree with those who do it. To agree, however, means this: when they could rebuke, they remain silent; or, when they hear such tales, they flatter. For the impure and hateful man, knowing that what he does is not unknown, and that he is not avoided in the least, but even held in honor, perhaps boasts of being such a person. Nor can he be put to shame in these things, when he sees that he is favored and indulged by those who are not like him; and therefore it comes about that they provide

fuel for those men's sins. Therefore it is fitting that they should be considered guilty of an equal crime. There are again others who not only do evil, but also give their approval to those who do it, so that they not only commit such acts themselves, but also approve those who do them. Their wickedness is therefore twofold: for those who do evil yet oppose the doers are not so wicked; for though they know of the crimes, they do not defend them. But those are utterly corrupt who both do these things and approve those who do them, so that they do not fear God; rather, desiring that evils should increase, they therefore by no means punish them, so that they may persuade others that such things are not to be avoided.

Chapter 2

Romans 2:1 ***Therefore you are without excuse, O every man who judges. For in whatever matter you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you practice the very same things that you judge.***

Since he shows that the one who does wicked deeds, and the one who consents to those who do them, are deserving of death, lest perhaps someone here who does this, and does not approve of those who do it, might think they can excuse themselves, he teaches that such a person will be without excuse. For it is not just that liberty be granted to him; because through hypocrisy he presents himself as not such a one, while he is found to be worse. For he deceives, so that while he ought to be punished, he appears worthy of honor.

Romans 2:2 ***Now we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon those who do such things.***

That is, we do not ignore that God will judge these deeds in truth, since we ourselves pass judgment on them. For if they displease us, how much more do they displease God, who is more just and zealous for His work! Therefore, when he says that God will judge these things in truth, he instills fear; so that He whom these deceitful people call careless, this One may declare that He will judge the wicked according to truth, that is, most truly render to each according to his measure, and not spare them.

Romans 2:3 ***Do you think this, O man, you who pass judgment on those who do such things and yet do them yourself: that you will escape the judgment of God?***

That is, is it because you have been given the authority to judge evil and sexual sins, while you commit the same, and because there is no one who presently judges you, that you will escape the judgment of God? Certainly not; for if you have escaped God's judgment in this world, though all this authority and judgment is from Him, you will not escape it in the future. For God Himself will judge, with whom flattery and partiality cease. Or if anyone thinks it just that a person of this sort should be free from punishment, let him say so. But if it is just that he should not escape, let him believe that God will judge, so that what he judges to be just may be true and fulfilled, and he may acknowledge that God, the creator of the world, carefully and diligently demands what His work deserves. For if He has made it and then neglects it, He is called a bad craftsman; because by neglecting it He shows that what He made is not good. But since it cannot be denied that He has made good things, for it is unworthy and improbable that the Good should have made evil, it must be said that He takes care of them; for it would be an insult and an accusation against Him

if He were thought negligent of the good things He has made: especially since life itself is sustained by His command and providence through the ministry of the elements, as the Lord Himself says: “He makes His sun rise on the good and the evil, and sends rain on the just and the unjust” (Matt. 5:45). So then, does He who provides care not also act to preserve what He has made, so that He may reward those who love Him and condemn those who despise Him?

Romans 2:4 ***And do you despise the riches of His goodness, and His patience, and His long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is meant to lead you to repentance?***

Paul says this so that you will not think you have already escaped, just because God’s goodness allows you to go on sinning for a long time; nor should you consider His patience something to be despised, as though He does not care about human affairs. Rather, understand that He refrains from acting against you now because God’s judgment is not promised for this life, but for the life to come, so that then you may regret not having believed that God is a judge: for when you are under punishment, without any benefit from your repentance, you will repent because you did not believe in God’s judgment, which you then see to be true. For it is necessary that the one whom the long patience has not corrected should be more sharply chastised, indeed, tormented with everlasting punishments. He speaks with great severity, knowing that a evil mind can scarcely be turned away from its vices except by fear.

Romans 2:5-6 ***But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself***

on the day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his works.

Hoping for exemption for his sins, the sinner not only remains hard, unchangeable, and ungovernable, but sins even more bitterly, feeling secure that there will be no future vengeance, having an unrepentant heart, not knowing that he is piling up wrath for himself for the day of wrath. For it is necessary that he who, during God's long patience, not only refused to improve himself but, adding to his contempt, increased his sins, should be punished with a harsher penalty and indeed be tormented with everlasting flames. The day of wrath is for sinners, on which they will be punished; therefore it is wrath for them, because they experience punishment on the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. For it will be revealed, that is, it will be recognized, what is now denied as future; and so, when that which is not believed to exist is shown, it is revealed. For it is shown to those who deny what is already clear to believers, so that they may confess, even against their will, *the righteous judgment of God, when he will render to each according to his works*. Will they not admit that these things are done justly, when they see the evils they have done to one another avenged?

Romans 2:7 ***To those who, in accordance with the patience of good works, seek glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life.***

For since the judgment of God has been proclaimed as just, he has also declared what it will be like for the good: he calls those so, who, knowing the patience of God, being extended partly for correction, partly for greater vengeance upon those who do not improve themselves, conduct themselves well, repenting of their former deeds, relying on the confidence of faith, lest by remaining

here long they experience loss of the promised life. He will therefore give them glory and honor. And lest this might not seem very great in comparison with the present life, since even here some appear glorious and honored, he added: *And incorruption*; so that another sort of glory and another sort of honor might be understood, when incorruption will accompany them at the same time. For in the present life honor or glory is often lost; because both the one who gives and what he gives, and the one who receives, are corruptible. But on the day of God's judgment an incorruptible honor and glory will be given, so that they may be wholly eternal; for the very substance will be glorified by a certain transformation according to merits. Therefore they seek eternal life, who are not only of good profession, but also of good life.

Romans 2:8 ***But for those who are combative, who distrust the truth yet obey iniquity, there will be wrath and anger, tribulation and distress,***

That is, repeated distress. Distrusting the future judgment of God through Christ, and thereby despising His patience, they strive to nullify that judgment, though it is true and firm. *Yet they put their faith in iniquity*; for iniquity is to deny what God has foretold will come to pass. He therefore assigns three other things fitting to unbelief, saying: *Wrath and anger and distress*. For wrath is not for the one who judges, but for the one who is judged, when he is made guilty. God is said to be wrathful so that He may be believed to be about to avenge; for the nature of God is free from these passions. And so that He may be believed not only to be wrathful but also to avenge, he adds: And anger; indignation is what, added on top of wrath, signifies that God will avenge His own outrage. Distresses, moreover, are those by which, constrained by the sentence, he will be afflicted in punishment.

Romans 2:9a ***Above every soul of a human being doing evil.***

In this work it signifies not only deeds, but also the profession of deceit. For he is speaking of the unbeliever; and therefore he said "above the soul," so that you may understand a spiritual punishment, not a bodily one; because the soul will be constrained by invisible punishments.

Romans 2:9b ***The Jews first, and the Greeks.***

He always puts the Jew first because of the birthright of the Fathers, so that he may either be crowned first or condemned; for, believing, he is more greatly honored on account of Abraham, but if he disbelieves, he must be treated more harshly, because he has rejected the gift promised to the Fathers.

Romans 2:10 ***But glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.***

Just as he set three punishments for unbelievers, so also for the faithful three magnificent things, so that they may have a double honor, as children of God; let there be glory for their transformation; and peace, because those who live well will be at rest in the future, disturbed by no turmoil; indeed, because every person who refrains from what is opposed has peace with the judge.

Romans 2:11 ***For there is no respect of persons with God.***

For he shows that neither Jew nor Greek is despised by God, provided that he believes in Christ, but that the righteousness of faith is bestowed on both alike; and likewise that those who do not

believe are equally guilty, because circumcision without faith is more harmful, and uncircumcision through faith is beneficial. Therefore he teaches that God is not a respecter of persons. For he does not follow the birthright of lineage so as to receive the unbelieving on account of their fathers, or to reject the believing because of the unworthiness of their parents; but he either rewards or condemns each person according to his own merit.

Romans 2:12a ***For whoever have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law.***

How can one sin without law, since we are all alike subject to the natural law? But he is speaking of the law of Moses, to which the Jews are bound when they do not believe; and likewise the Gentiles, but long ago, because they refused to join themselves to it. Therefore the unbelieving Gentiles become guilty in a twofold way: because they neither consented to the law given through Moses nor received the grace of Christ; therefore it is fitting that they should perish. Therefore, just as whoever sins without the law will perish, so also whoever without the law has kept the law will be justified. For one who naturally keeps righteousness is a guardian of the law. For if the law is not laid down for the righteous (1 Tim. 1:9), but for the unrighteous, then whoever does not sin is a friend of the law. This person lacks only faith, by which he may be made perfect; for it will be of no benefit to him before God to abstain from what is contrary, unless he has received faith in God, so that he may be righteous in both respects; because that is the righteousness of time, but this is of eternity.

Romans 2:12b ***And whoever have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.***

For the Jews have the Law, in which salvation is promised to them; not believing, or not accepting the promise, they will be judged by the Law under which they lived. For with that very Law accusing them, they will pay the penalties: indeed, the case of the Jews is in a way more serious in their own regard than that of the nations. For just as believers are preferred, so also when they lack faith, they are found worse: for one who has lost what he had is more displeasing than one who could not obtain what he did not hope for. This man did not enter the royal palace; that one was cast out.

Romans 2:13 ***For it is not the hearers of the Law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.***

Paul says this because those are not righteous who merely hear the Law, but those who believe in Christ, whom that same Law promised; and this is what it is to do the Law. But no one fulfills the Law who does not believe the Law, since he does not accept the one to whom the Law bears witness. Yet someone who does not appear to be in the Law, because he is uncircumcised in the flesh, but believes in Christ, is said to have fulfilled the Law. And the one who says that he is in the Law, that is, the Jew, becomes a hearer of the Law, not a doer, because he does not believe in Christ written of in the Law, just as Philip said to Nathanael: "We have found Jesus, the one of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote" (Jn. 1:45).

Romans 2:14 ***For when the Gentiles, who do not have the Law, by nature do the things that belong to the Law.***

Elsewhere he calls the Gentiles Christians: For I say to you Gentiles (Col. 2:16); because the uncircumcised observe neither new moons, nor the sabbath, nor the law concerning foods, and

under the guidance of nature believe in God and in Christ, that is, in the Father and the Son; for this is to keep the Law, to acknowledge the God of the Law. For the first part of wisdom is this: to fear God the Father, from whom are all things; and the Lord Jesus His Son, through whom are all things. Therefore nature itself, by its own judgment, recognizes its Creator, not through the Law, but through the reasoning of nature; for the work discerns the craftsman in itself.

Romans 2:15a ***Although they do not have the Law, they are a law unto themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts.***

The meaning is the same: because, while they believe under the guidance of nature, they show the work of the law not through the letter, but through conscience. Now the work of the law is faith, which, when it presents what is spoken to God, by natural judgment shows that it is itself a law to them; because what the law commands, it freely does, namely, that it believes in Christ.

Romans 2:15b ***With their own conscience bearing witness to them.***

By their inner conscience as witness they believe, because they are aware within themselves that what they believe is fitting for them; for it is appropriate for a creature to believe in and venerate its Creator, nor is it absurd that a servant should acknowledge his Lord.

Romans 2:16 ***And with their thoughts accusing one another, or even defending one another, on the day when***

God will judge the hidden things of men according to my Gospel, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Since he said that the unbelieving Jews would be judged by the Law (for the Law will accuse them, which promised Christ to them, whom, when he came, they refused to receive), but the Gentiles, who certainly do not have the Law, will be judged by their conscience if they are unwilling to believe. First, the believing Gentiles will be accusers of the unbelieving Gentiles; just as the Lord says to the unbelieving Jews about his disciples: They will be your judges (Matt. 12:27); because the unbelief of the Jews will be judged by the faith of the apostles, who, though they were of them, believed while they were unbelieving. Then the Gentiles will be accused by their own thoughts if, having been pierced in conscience, they refuse to believe in the faith and power of the Creator: or if, through a certain dullness, they do not reflect so as to believe in the words and deeds of the Lord, defending themselves by conscience on the day of judgment, because he did not think that he ought to believe; and he is judged not as wicked, but as ignorant; yet they will not be without punishment, because it is not permitted to be ignorant of this. For he signifies the Gentiles in a twofold manner, both believers and the faithless; for above he speaks about believing Gentiles: afterward he adds also concerning those Gentiles who do not believe; so that just as believers are praised by their conscience, so also the unbelievers are accused by their conscience. For although he who has not believed seems to himself in no way guilty, because he could not deal with this within himself, yet he is convicted by reason; because he did not persuade himself that this is true, which he saw confirmed by testimonies of miracles, and followed by many.

I think it can also be understood in this way, if the whole question is believed to have been spoken about believing Gentiles, because Paul says: What business is it of mine to judge those who are outside? (1 Cor. 5:12). And, He who does not believe, he says, is

already judged (Jn. 3:18). And, For the wicked shall not rise in the judgment (Ps. 1:5). For those who sin without the law will also perish without the law; and therefore they will not be able to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account; because, when they rise, they will be led to Gehenna. Those whom he says are accused or defended by their thoughts on the day of God's judgment are Christians who are at odds with Catholic truth, holding different opinions about Christ, or about the sense of the Law in the tradition of the Church, whether Cataphrygians *[also called Montanists]*, or Novatians, or Donatists, or other heretics. The thoughts of these will accuse one another on the day of judgment; if someone has understood that Catholic doctrine is true, and, so as not to appear corrected, refused to follow it, being ashamed to depart from what he had long held, on the day of judgment he will be accused by his own thought. For two thoughts in a man will accuse one another, the good and the bad. The good accuses the bad, because it contradicted the truth; the bad in turn accuses the good, because it did not follow what it felt; and, through this, he who has thought, sensing that the Catholic Church is good and true, and has remained in heresy or schism, is established as guilty. But the thoughts of him who has always thought this, supposing what he followed to be useful, will defend one another. For he will say: I have always thought in my thoughts that what I followed was useful: this was my faith. He will have a lighter case, although he must be corrected; because he will not be accused by his conscience on the day of judgment. In this way the hidden things of men will be judged on the day of God's judgment through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 2:17 ***But if you are called a Jew.***

The surname "Jew" exists because, by the privilege of their ancestors, they are called Israelites. And yet, if we wish to grasp

fully everything that relates to the matter, we ought to notice that the surname "Jew" is signified in a threefold way. First, because they are sons of Abraham, who by the merit of his faith was appointed the father of all nations. Then, on account of Jacob, who for the sake of the increase of faith was called Israel; for the dignity begun in the father is dignified in the children. Third, not so much on account of Judah as on account of Christ; for since He came from Judah according to the flesh, they are called Jews, because in Judah was signified what was to come in Christ. For it is said: "Judah shall be your leader" (Judg. 20:18); and, "Judah, your brothers shall praise you" (Gen. 49:8). This praise given to Judah is not proved to belong to him, but to Christ, whom all those whom He consented to call His brothers praise daily. For He Himself said to the women: "Go, and tell my brothers that I go before you into Galilee" (Matt. 28:7). For who does not praise Him by whose favor he lives? The Apostle, therefore, under this meaning, which is later in order, but greater in merit, wished everything to be understood: which the Jews, not understanding, claim for themselves the name of the carnal Judah.

Romans 2:18 ***And you rest in the Law, and you glory in God, and you know His will, and you approve the things that are better, being instructed by the Law.***

A Jew does not wish to appear very admirable if he believes; for he is, after all, instructed by the Law. But it is very dangerous if he does not believe; for he has the Law as his guide. Yet, so that the believer may be given preference, the merit of the Fathers brings this about; because although someone may flourish on his own, he is nevertheless put to shame in what is his own.

Romans 2:19-20 ***And you are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little ones, having the pattern of knowledge and truth in the Law.***

These things are true; for the purpose of the Law is this: to instruct the ignorant and to subject the profane to God; or to call the wicked away from the worship of idols, by means of the promise that was given through the Law, to the confidence of a better hope. Therefore the teacher of the Law rightly glories in these things, because he hands on the pattern of truth. But if he does not receive Him whom the Law has promised, he glories in the Law in vain, and does it injury, since he ridicules Christ, who is promised in the Law; and he will no longer be an instructor of the foolish, nor a teacher of little ones, nor a light to those who are in darkness, but a leader of all these to perdition.

Romans 2:21 ***So then, you who teach another, do not teach yourself.***

That is, you who accuse the Gentiles of being without Law and without God, do not accuse yourself: for distrusting Christ who was promised in the Law, you are found in the very things that you accuse.

Romans 2:22a ***You who preach that one must not steal, you steal; for you do what you preach should not be done.***

Indeed, while you secretly undermine faith in Christ through a corrupt interpretation, you deny our Christ who was promised in the Law.

Romans 2:22b ***You who say that one must not commit adultery, you commit adultery***.

But you commit adultery against the Law when you remove the truth of Christ and put falsehood in its place. Therefore in another passage he says: Adulterators of the word of God. (2 Cor. 2:17).

Romans 2:22c ***You who curse idols, you commit sacrilege:***

You are sacrilegious when you deny Christ, whom the Law and the prophetic word signify as God; for Isaiah says: Because in you is God, and there is no God besides you. You are indeed God, and we did not know it: the God of Israel, the Savior (Isa. 45:14). Were the Jews speaking of God the Father when they said: You indeed are God, and we did not know it; when the whole Law proclaims the authority of God the Father, from whom are all things? Rather, since the Son of God did indeed always appear, yet it was hidden who he was; when after the resurrection he is recognized, it is said to him in confession: You indeed are God, and we did not know it. And he who in the Law was thought to be only an Angel and the leader of the army of the Lord, when he is understood to be the Son of God, it is said to him with thanksgiving: You indeed are God, and we did not know it. Therefore this signifies that it was he himself who had appeared to the patriarchs as God and was later incarnate, but had not been understood by all.

Romans 2:23 ***You who glory in the Law, through transgressing the Law dishonor God.***

You are a transgressor of the Law when you bypass the meaning of the Law, which concerns the incarnation and divinity of Christ; and you dishonor God when you do not accept the testimony that

He has given about His Son. For He Himself said: This is my beloved Son (Matt. 3:17).

<u>Romans 2:24</u> ***For the name of God is blasphemed among the nations because of you, as it is written*** (Isa. 52:5).

Isaiah the prophet said this, because the name of God is blasphemed among the nations when they did not realize that the Jews had been handed over to them on account of their own offenses; instead they ascribed glory to their idols, as though they had defeated the God of the Jews in the Jews themselves. So also in the time of the apostles the name of God was blasphemed in Christ; for by denying that Christ is God, the Jews were blaspheming the Father as well, just as the Lord says: "He who receives me does not receive me, but him who sent me" (Luke 9:48). And therefore he was blasphemed among the nations, because the Jews tried to persuade the believing Gentiles that Christ should not be believed to be God, so that the blasphemy of the nations might have its origin from the Jews or from the followers of Photinus.

<u>Romans 2:25a</u> ***Circumcision indeed is of benefit, if you observe the Law.***

It can be said in reply: If circumcision is beneficial, why is it set aside? But then it is beneficial if you observe the Law. Circumcision, therefore, must be maintained; and in order that it may be able to benefit, the Law must be kept. What then forbade that which, if the Law is observed, is shown to be beneficial? It therefore seems wrongly forbidden, since it is not displeasing in itself, but is said to be rendered useless by another's negligence.

<u>Romans 2:25b</u> ***But if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.***

This is what he says, because if the Law has not been kept, the Jew becomes a Gentile. But he took circumcision as standing for the lineage of Abraham, because circumcision comes from Abraham; for he could not build up what he had destroyed. He says this in order to teach that it is then beneficial to be of the stock of Abraham, if the Law is kept, that is, if there is belief in Christ, who was promised to Abraham; because those who are justified by faith have their own merit, and are exalted by the honor of the Fathers. For all salvation in the Law is about Christ. Therefore, he keeps the Law who believes in Christ; but if he does not believe, he is a transgressor of the Law, because he does not receive Christ, whom the Law foretold would come for justification, which it itself could not give. And it will be of no benefit to him to be called a son of Abraham, because he is a son of Abraham according to merit who follows the faith by which Abraham became worthy of God. Therefore he says: *Your circumcision has become uncircumcision*, that is, you have been made like a Gentile, not believing in him who, under the sign of circumcision, was promised as a son to Abraham.

<u>Romans 2:26</u> ***If, therefore, the foreskin keeps the righteousness of the Law, will not that foreskin be reckoned to them as circumcision?***

The righteousness of the Law is Christian faith, just as he says elsewhere: “For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness for everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4). Therefore it is clear that if a Gentile believes in Christ, he becomes a son of Abraham, who is the father of faith.

Romans 2:27 ***And he will judge, as circumcision by nature, you who, while completing the Law, are a transgressor of the Law through the letter and circumcision.***

The believing Gentile, led by nature, in Christ condemns the Jew, to whom the Law had promised Christ, and who was unwilling to believe in Him when He came. How great, then, is the glory the Gentile deserves, who by nature alone understood the author, as the apostle Peter says: But you killed the Author of life (Acts 3:15); and so much the more must the Jew be punished, who recognized Christ as the author neither through nature nor through the Law.

Romans 2:28-29 ***For the one who is outwardly so is not a Jew; nor is that which is outward, in the flesh, circumcision. Rather, the one who is a Jew is so in what is hidden; and circumcision is that of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God.***

It is not unclear that he denies that circumcision of the flesh has praise before God (for Abraham was not justified because he was circumcised, but because he believed he was justified, and afterwards he was circumcised), whereas circumcision of the heart is praiseworthy before God. For to circumcise the heart, by cutting away error, is to acknowledge the Creator. And because the circumcision of the heart was to come, Moses first said: You shall circumcise the hardness of your heart (Deut. 10:16). And likewise Jeremiah: Circumcise the foreskin of your heart (Jer. 4:4). He said this to the Jews who followed idols; for there is a veil over the heart, which, when turned to God, he circumcises; because faith removes the mist of error and grants a perfect knowledge of God in the mystery of the Trinity, which was unknown from ages past. The praise of this circumcision, therefore, is from God, hidden

from men; for it is a merit of the heart which God looks upon, not of the flesh. For the praise of the Jews is from men; for they glory in the circumcision of the flesh, that it is from the Fathers. Therefore, among other things, he says: And their glory is in their shame, who savor earthly things (Phil. 3:19); that is, those who think circumcision of the flesh is glory. For he who glories in the flesh savors earthly things; but he who glories in the spirit, his praise is from God; for it is by the spirit, not the flesh, that one believes.

Chapter 3

Romans 3:1-2 ***For what advantage does the Jew have, or what is the benefit of circumcision? Much in every way. First of all, because the oracles of God were entrusted to them.***

Although there are many things that refer to the honor and merit of the seed of Abraham, he openly mentions only this, because their greatest praise is that they were judged worthy to receive the Law, through which they might learn to distinguish what is right from what is perverse, so that after this first point they could understand what the rest are like. But since he shows that for carnal Jews, that is, unbelievers, the testimony of their lineage profits nothing, lest he seem to have treated all, including believers, harshly, he teaches that it is very useful for believing Jews that they are sons of Abraham. For to them the oracles of God were entrusted, when they received the Law, which had been worn out by the sins of men, as though one could sin with immunity before God, now renewed by virtue of the Fathers; and they are called the people of God. Egypt also, on account of the wrongs done to them, is struck with various plagues; they are fed

with heavenly bread; they are a terror to all nations, as Rahab the prostitute bears witness; and to them also Christ the Savior was promised for sanctification (Jos. 2:9 ff.). Therefore he says that it is very useful for the Jews in every way that they are sons of Abraham: for they are preferred to the Gentiles, but those who believe.

> **Romans 3:3** ***For what if some of them did not believe? Will their unbelief make void the faithfulness of God? Far from it.***

He does not say that because some of the Jews were unwilling to believe what God promised to the children of Abraham, the other Jews will therefore be bigoted, so that they are deemed unworthy to receive what God has promised to the faithful; especially since the promise was made in such a way that it would benefit those who believe. Therefore God, not being angered on account of the deceit of those, that is, of the Jews, will give to the others who believe eternal life, which He promised would come through faith in Christ; because those who did not believe made themselves unworthy, without prejudice to the rest. Having said this, he praises the believing Jews; for nothing harms them because many of their number were unwilling to believe.

> **Romans 3:4** ***For God is truthful [verax], but every man a liar, as it is written: "That you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged"*** (Ps. 50:6).

To strengthen what he said above, that God is faithful [*fidelis*] in His promise and every man a liar, he added a prophetic example from the fiftieth psalm, in which both God is shown to be justified in His words, and man is marked as a liar on account of unbelief.

For both are read in the book of Psalms: that God is just and truthful, and every man a liar (Ps. 85:15). He calls man a liar when he does not believe what God has promised; for the one who denies that He will give what He has promised is a liar. And since he himself is a liar, he in many ways declares God to be a liar when he does not believe His promises. Therefore he calls every man a liar who lacks trust in the promises of God. Yet this applies especially to the Jews, whose case the Apostle is dealing with in this passage: they, seeing Christ, denied that He was the one whom God had promised; and therefore they are declared liars. But God is truthful, who sent Christ as He had promised; and so He overcomes when He is judged, because He will give what He is denied to be going to give. For when He is not believed, He is judged a liar. But when He gives what He is judged not to be going to give, He overcomes, showing Himself truthful and the one who does not believe His words to be a liar. For he will see the Son of God in majesty, whom he now denies; he will also see the resurrection of the flesh and will know that his faithlessness has been defeated by the promise and the truth of God. For Christ too, when He was judged, overcame: for He was unjustly put to death and made the Devil guilty, whom He had already overcome by not sinning, so that, being defeated a second time, the Devil would lose those whom he held.

Romans 3:5-6a ***But if our unrighteousness conveys the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak according to man.) Far from it.***

The Apostle says this according to the sense of the prophet David. Now David, when he had sinned in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (2 Kings 11), knowing that a promise cannot be given to sinners, prays that the justification of the words of God may prevail in the

judgment by which those who sin are judged (Ps. 51:6), and that, by sanctifying the penitent, He may reform him, so as to give him what He has promised to give to the righteous. And therefore he adds: *But if our unrighteousness conveys the righteousness of God,* etc., that is, if because we are sinners, God is justified, He would be unjust if He were to punish. For if our unrighteousness were of benefit to Him, then without doubt He would be unjust if He condemned sinners, since our unrighteousness makes God righteous, if, while we are sinners, He gives to us what He has promised to the saints. For although we are sinners, we are nevertheless reformed through repentance, so that, being cleansed, we may merit to receive the promise, no longer as sinners. Therefore the meaning of the prophet David's words is not, when he says: Against you alone have I sinned, and done evil before you; that you may be justified in your words and may prevail when you are judged (Ps. 51:4), that which is maintained by the wicked interpretation of wicked men: namely, that the sins of men and evil deeds contribute to God's justification, and that through our evils He appears good, and our unrighteousness shows Him to be just. Since therefore God is not unjust when He inflicts wrath, He is no longer justified by our sins; for if He were justified by our sins, He would be unjust if He avenged them. But because He is not unjust when He punishes, it is clear that our unrighteousness does not convey the righteousness of God. For if it did commend it, He would not punish, because He is just.

And therefore he adds: *I speak,* he says, *according to man. Far from it;* that is, far be it that God should be called unjust, because this belongs to man, who plainly can err, and be deceived, and deceive. For God remains unchangeable, nor can He fail to love what He has made.

<u>Romans 3:6b</u> ***Otherwise, how will God judge this world?***

It is true that it would not be just for God to judge the world if its sins were of benefit to Him, so that, while men sin by His permission and then obtain pardon, God would appear good; and if they did not sin, He would not appear just. For if they do not sin, then, having no one to forgive, He would not be good.

Romans 3:7 ***For if the truth of God has flourished to His glory through my lie, why am I still judged as a sinner?***

It is clear that if the lie of men advances the glory of God, so that He alone may appear true, those who sin are not to be called sinners; for they will seem to sin not by their own will, but by His impulse, which be far from us.

Romans 3:8a ***And is it not, as we are slandered and as some claim we say, "Let us do evil so that good may come"?***

Paul now makes clear on whose account he discusses these things carefully and with reverence. For this was alleged by depraved people, as though this were the meaning of those who preach the forgiveness of sins: that they should do evil so that good might come, that is, that they should sin so that, by forgiving them, God might appear good, according to what was said above. This he calls blasphemy and rejects as foreign to the meaning of divine teaching. For faith does not hand down that one ought to sin, since it proclaims that God will judge; rather, it gives counsel to those who go astray, so that, having regained salvation and now living under the law of God, they may no longer sin.

And for this reason he added: ***Whose condemnation is just***; that is, the condemnation of those people who, out of jealous envy, interpret this about us as was said above, is just. For the Jews were

boasting of this in order to accuse apostolic teaching, saying that when they preach the forgiveness of sins, they supply fuel for sinning; so that, as if people were secure because of forgiveness, they would readily sin. Yet it is clear that after receiving the faith, it is dangerous to sin, and this is proclaimed to believers.

> **<u>Romans 3:9</u>** ***What then? Do we excel them? By no means. For we have brought a charge that Jews and Greeks are all under sin.***

That is, why do we still linger, speaking at greater length? For we have shown, by setting forth the grounds, that both Jews and Greeks are all guilty, and that therefore the Law is kept in vain. First, he shows that the Greeks are guilty according to the law of nature, and that they did not even accept the Law of Moses; for which reason their case is very bad and exceedingly grave. Then he also shows that the Jews are guilty, who appear to live under the law of God, and who might rightly defend their own dignity on account of the fathers, especially because they have despised the promise made to the fathers, thereby rendering the grace of God of no effect. To confirm this, he adds a prophetic example from the thirteenth psalm, saying:

> **<u>Romans 3:10</u>** ***As it is written, that there is no one who is righteous*** (Ps. 13:4, etc.).

From unrighteousness he began to list their evil deeds, and in part to add worse ones, so that he might show that no hope is seen in these things, unless they beg for the mercy of Christ, who forgives sins.

Romans 3:11a Then he added: "***There is no one who understands.***"

This is true, because if a person made an effort to understand, he would not be unrighteous.

Romans 3:11b ***"There is no one who seeks God."***

This too is evident, because if he understood how beneficial it would be, he would seek God, and would not act like Asa, king of Judah, who after many benefits from God became so corrupted that, when he suffered an illness in his feet and a prophet was present, he did not seek God. (2 Chron. 16:12)

Romans 3:12a ***"They have all turned aside, together they have become worthless"*** (1 Kings 15:23).

No one doubts that all who do not seek God turn aside so as to look for help in vanity; but an idol is vanity, and therefore they become useless.

Romans 3:12b ***"There is none who does good, not even one."***

Since they have neglected God and become useless, they are of course unable to do good; already corrupted, they advance from bad to worse.

Romans 3:13a ***Their throat is an open grave.***

Already enslaved to evil, they wanted to devour the good, if it were possible; so that, just as a grave lies open to receive corpses, so too their throat is open against the righteous.

Romans 3:13b ***With their tongues they dealt deceitfully.***

Having become accustomed to such evil deeds, whatever they spoke was in deceit.

Romans 3:13c ***The poison of asps is under their lips.***

Paul says this because the words of such people are a snare. For they speak with this purpose: to deceive; just as poison is poured out through the lips of a serpent, so through their lips come guile and trickery.

Romans 3:14 ***Their mouth is full of curse and bitterness.***

It is clear that the wicked always hurl curses and bitter words against the good, breaking out in insults and slander against them.

Romans 3:15 ***Swift are their feet to shed blood.***

This Paul said about the murder of the prophets, whom they killed without delay, sluggish for what is good, swift for murder.

Romans 3:16a ***Contrition and unhappiness are in their ways.***

Since they had been quick to do evil, it declares that their path or step is troubled and unhappy.

Romans 3:16b ***And the way of peace they have not known.***

The way of peace is gentle and undisturbed; for every good life is calm, and modest actions themselves are peaceful, and through these one goes to God. They therefore, unwilling to know these things, chose the way of tribulation, by which one goes into Gehenna.

Romans 3:17 ***There is no fear of God before their eyes.***

For such people, being without understanding, do not have the fear of God; for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," says Solomon (Prov. 1:7). And Paul did not say that they do not have the fear of God, but: "*There is*," he says, "*no fear of God before their eyes*." For seeing their own wicked deeds and not shuddering, they are said not to have the fear of God before their eyes. All these people are also indicated by the prophet Jeremiah, when he says among other things: "Then all rose up against the prophet of the Lord, wanting to kill him. And it continues: But all the people did not permit it" (Jer. 26:8, 16). Therefore he speaks of "all" of them, yet meaning the wicked; and of "all" these, meaning the good. For when he says, "All have turned aside," he does not mean the whole people without exception, but this portion of the people, just as the aforementioned prophet relates: among whom all the wicked have gathered themselves. For there are always two peoples within one nation. This, then, is the people whom the Lord rebukes under the name of Jerusalem, saying: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets" (Matt. 23:37). And in another place: "An evil and adulterous generation," he says, and "Brood of vipers" (Matt. 12:39). Concerning such people the prophet Isaiah also laments, saying: "Woe to the sinful

nation, a wicked seed!" (Isa. 1:4). For through evil will, while they produce evil fruits, they are a wicked seed. And because, if they wish, they can be converted, the voice of the Apostle proves this in another Epistle, when Paul says: "We were by nature children of wrath, just like the others at one time" (Eph. 2:3).

<u>Romans 3:18</u> ***Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law.***

It is clear that the Law accuses those who at first did not believe their leader Moses, nor obeyed their fathers the prophets, whom they persecuted and killed, nor the apostles, their kinsmen according to the flesh, whose blood they shed, always wicked and rebellious against God, so that they may be condemned by the Law, whose authority they thought could be despised. For just as there is one cause of all evils in what is evil, so also of all goods. In these, therefore, the evil common to all who are like them is condemned. These things concern the confusion of the Jews, who drew testimony for themselves and their fathers from the Law.

<u>Romans 3:19</u> ***So that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be made subject to God.***

Paul says this because, with the Jews bound in sins, the whole world is made subject to God. For no one doubts that the pagans were overwhelmed by sins and transgressions, and therefore the whole world is laid low before God, so that it may be able to attain forgiveness; for the whole world consisted of Jews and Gentiles, from whom the faithful have been set apart. When, therefore, he proves that the Jews, who received the Law from God and to whom the promise was made, are liable to sins, there is no doubt that all the Greeks are guilty of death. Therefore*: Let every mouth be stopped,* he says, a*nd let the whole world be made subject to*

God; since all, proven guilty, are in need of the mercy of God, both Jews and also Greeks.

<u>Romans 3:20a</u> ***Since indeed no flesh shall be justified by the works of the Law before God.***

Paul does not therefore claim that men are by no means justified before God because they did not keep the law of righteousness in its commandments; but because they were unwilling to believe in the sacrament of the mystery of God which is in Christ. For by this God decreed to justify man, not by the law, because the law justifies for a time, not before God. Therefore those who keep the law are just in time, but not before God, because the faith by which men are justified before God is not in them. For faith is greater than the law, because the law pertains to us, faith to God. Therefore the law has temporal righteousness, faith eternal. For in saying "all flesh" he meant "every man," just as the prophet Isaiah also says: And all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Isa. 40:5); that is, every man shall see the Christ of God, in whom the salvation of all is contained. And therefore they are signified by "flesh," because they are subject to sins. For just as righteousness makes men spiritual, so sins make them carnal, so that a man receives his name from his way of acting.

<u>Romans 3:20b</u> ***For by the law comes the knowledge of sin, but by faith its removal.***

Therefore faith is to be followed. What is this law, through which Paul says that sin became known, and how was it made known? For we see that the ancients were not ignorant of sin; since Joseph too was cast into prison, though by false accusation (Gen. 39:20), and Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker because of sin (Gen. 40:3). How then were sins hidden? The law is indeed threefold: so that

the first part concerns the sacrament of the divinity of God; the second, which agrees with the natural law, which forbids sin; and the third, of works, that is, of the sabbath, the new moon, circumcision, etc. This therefore is the natural law, which, partly renewed through Moses and partly confirmed in its authority for restraining vices, made sin known, not that it was hidden, as I said, but it showed that the sins which are committed will not go unpunished before God, lest perhaps someone who escapes for a time be thought to have mocked the law. This is what the law shows.

Romans 3:21 ***Now indeed, without the Law, the justice of God has been revealed, having testimony from the Law and the prophets.***

It has been made clear that the justice of God has appeared without the Law, yet without the law of the sabbath and of circumcision and of the new moon and of vengeance; but not without the sacrament of the divinity of God, since the justice of God is from the sacrament of God. For when those whom the Law held as guilty, the justice of God forgave them, it certainly did this without the Law; because for those against whom the Law was going to take vengeance, this (justice) granted them forgiveness of sin. And lest this be thought to have been done against the Law, he added that the justice of God has testimony from the Law and the prophets, that is, because the Law itself in another place had long ago said that this would come to pass; that He was going to come who would save mankind (Isa. 19:20): which had not been granted to the Law, namely, to forgive sins. But it has been called the justice of God, which seems to be mercy, because it has its origin from the promise; and when the promise of God is fulfilled, it is called the justice of God. For it is justice, because what was promised has been repaid; and when it receives those who flee to

it, it is called justice, because not to receive one who flees for refuge is injustice.

Romans 3:22a ***But the righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ.***

What else does "*through faith in Jesus Christ*" mean, except that the righteousness of God itself is the revealing of Christ? For through faith in the preaching of Jesus Christ, the gift long ago promised by God is recognized or received.

Romans 3:22b ***Upon all or over all who believe.***

That is, over all Jews and Greeks who believe in the true righteousness of God.

Romans 3:23 ***For there is no distinction; for all have sinned and are in need of the glory of God.***

Because he had said that the righteousness of God is over all Jews and Greeks, to prove this he added: *For all*, he says, *have sinned*. This is to be taken in a general sense, so that both Jews and Greeks are understood; therefore he says: *There is no distinction*; for by "*all*" he includes everyone here, even the priests, to show that the law was of no benefit without faith. For the law was given in such a way that there should be faith in the law, which would hope for the salvation to come. Therefore the death of Christ has profited all, because in this world he both taught what must be believed and observed, and he delivered all from hell.

Romans 3:24a ***Justified freely by his grace.***

They have been justified freely, because, doing nothing and rendering nothing in return, they have been justified by faith alone as a gift of God.

Romans 3:24b ***Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.***

He bears witness that the grace of God is in Christ; because by the will of God we have been redeemed by Christ, so that, having been set free, we might be justified, just as Paul also says to the Galatians: Christ redeemed us (Gal. 3:13), offering himself for us. For he allowed himself to be handed over to the raging Devil, but without the Devil's knowing it beforehand. Thinking that he could hold Christ, he received him, as it were; but because he was not able to endure his power, he lost all those whom he held, together with him.

Romans 3:25a ***God has set forth as an atoner through faith.***

He says this because in Christ God has set forth, that is, he has ordained, that he would be gracious toward the human race, if they believe.

Romans 3:25b ***In his blood.***

Therefore "*in his blood*," because by his death we have been freed; so that he might both show him as having died, and condemn death by his passion.

Romans 3:26a ***To show forth His justice,***

That is, to reveal His promise by which He would free us from sins, just as He had previously promised; and when He fulfilled this, He showed Himself to be just.

Romans 3:26b ***On account of the restraint of previous sins, in the patience of God.***

Knowing the purpose of His kindness, by which He resolved to come to the aid of sinners, both those who are among the blessed above and those who were held in hell; He long waited for both, annulling the sentence by which it seemed just that all should be condemned, in order to show us that He had long ago decreed to deliver the human race through Christ, as He promised through the prophet Jeremiah, saying: I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more (Jer. 31:34). And lest it might seem that He had promised this gift to the Jews alone, He says through Isaiah: My house shall be called a house of prayer among all nations (Isa. 56:7). For although the promise was made to Judaism, yet God, foreknowing that the ungodly Jews would reject His gift, promised that He would admit the Gentiles to receive His grace, so that through their jealousy the ungodly Jews, sent into wrath, would be tormented.

Romans 3:26c ***In this time.***

That is, in our time, when God has given what He once promised He would give at the time when He gave it. So that He might be just, justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ. He rightly says this, because in order that He might be just, He gave what He had promised; and this He had promised, that He would justify those who believe in Christ. And He says in Habakkuk: But the righteous man lives by faith (Hab. 2:4); so that, while he has faith in God and in Christ, he may be righteous.

Romans 3:27 ***Where then is your boasting? It is omitted. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.***

Having given the explanation, Paul speaks to those who live under the law, that they boast without cause, flattering themselves because of the law and because they are of the lineage of Abraham, seeing that a person is not justified before God except by faith.

Romans 3:28 ***For we hold that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law.***

Paul says that the Gentile is regarded as one who is certainly justified when he believes, doing no works of the law, that is, without circumcision, or new moons, or the observance of the Sabbath.

Romans 3:29 ***Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.***

Without doubt there is one God of all. For the Jews cannot claim for themselves alone that God is theirs and not also the God of the Gentiles, since they themselves trace the origin of all from one Adam, and forbid no foreigner who wishes to come to the Law from doing so. In fact, some Egyptians went out with them into the wilderness, whom they are commanded to receive (Exod. 12:28 ff.), on the sole condition that they be circumcised and eat unleavened bread or the Passover together with them; and likewise that Cornelius, a Gentile who did not live as a Jew, received the gift of God and that he was justified, is proved by divine testimony (Acts 10:31).

<u>Romans 3:30</u> ***Since indeed there is one God, who justified the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith.***

In "*circumcision*" he means the Jews, because by faith in the promise they were justified, believing this to be the Christ whom God had promised in the Law. In "*uncircumcision*," however, he means the Gentiles, justified before God through faith in Christ. For he justified both Gentiles and Jews in no other way than as believers; for since there is one God of all, he justified all by one and the same principle. What then does circumcision of the flesh profit, or what harm is there in uncircumcision, when neither dignity nor merit is produced by anything except faith?

<u>Romans 3:31</u> ***Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yes, we establish the law.***

Indeed, the law is not made void through faith, but fulfilled; for its status is confirmed, when faith testifies that what it said would come has arrived. This is for the sake of the Jews, who think that the faith of Christ is hostile to the law, being ignorant of the sense of the law. Therefore, he does not make void the law, when he already teaches that it ought to cease; because he asserts that it was rightly given in its own time, but that it ought not to act any longer. For in the law itself it is said that at the time of the fulfilled promise the law ought to cease; for the angel Gabriel, to the prophet Daniel who had the desire to know this matter, shows (Dan. 9:25), saying among other things, that with Christ coming, the chrism, that is, the royal anointing, which is understood as power, will cease. And judgment, he says, will no longer be, which is the law, and my sacrifice will be taken away. Therefore, he says 'my', so that it might be known that the old offering would cease. Revealing this sense, the Savior says: The law and the prophets were until John (Luke 16:16). And because with the law of Moses

ceasing, God was about to give better precepts, the prophet Jeremiah sang, saying: Behold, the days will come, says the Lord, and I will consummate with the house of Israel and the house of Judah a New Testament, not according to that which I gave to their fathers (Jerem. 31:31). To those, certainly, who received the coming Christ from the promise. Therefore the Savior says: I came not, he says, to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17). And because the house of God was to be not only in Jerusalem alone, but also in other places, the prophet Zachariah says: I will place Jerusalem among all nations (Zach. 12:2): which is the Church.

Chapter 4

Romans 4:1 ***What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found?***

After he has shown that no one can be justified before God by works of the Law, he adds that not even *Abraham* was able to merit anything *according to the flesh*. By "flesh" he meant circumcision, because Abraham sought nothing by means of circumcision. For he was justified before he was circumcised.

Romans 4:2 ***For if Abraham was justified by the works of the Law, he has glory, but not with God.***

This is what is being set forth. For Abraham was justified by faith, which no one doubts; therefore he has glory with God. But since those who keep the law, whether that of Moses or the natural law, are justified for the present so that they may not be guilty in the present judgment, he therefore says: *If Abraham was justified by*

the works of the law, he does not have glory with God; for, he says, "whoever shall have done the law shall live in it," (Gal. 3:12, Rom. 10:5, Lev. 18:5) that is, he will not die as one guilty; yet he will not from this have merit with God, but on account of faith.

Romans 4:3 ***For what does Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*** (Gen. 15:6).

It has shown that Abraham does not have glory before God because he was circumcised or because he kept himself from iniquity, but because he believed God; therefore he was justified and will obtain the reward of his praise in the future.

Romans 4:4 ***But to him who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt.***

It is settled that for him who is subject to the law of deeds, that is, of Moses, or to the natural law, merit is not counted toward a reward so that he may have glory before God. For he is a debtor to do the law, because necessity is laid upon him by the law, so that, whether he wills or not, he does the law lest he be condemned, as it says elsewhere: But those who despise it experience condemnation for themselves, because they are at present liable to judgment (Rom. 13:2). But to believe or not to believe belongs to the will. For no one can be forced to accept what is not revealed, but is invited; for it is not forced, but urged by persuasion. Therefore the one who consents ought to be granted rewards, just as Abraham, who believed what he did not see.

Romans 4:5a ***To the one who does not work,***

That is, to the one who is liable for sins, who does not do what the law commands.

Romans 4:5b ***But to the one who believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.***

Paul says this because, without works of the law, the ungodly, namely the Gentile, who believes in Christ, has his faith reckoned as righteousness, just as Abraham did. How then do the Jews think they are justified by the works of the law with the justification of Abraham, when they see that Abraham was justified not by the works of the law, but by faith alone? Therefore the law is not needed, since the ungodly is justified before God by faith alone.

Romans 4:5c ***According to the purpose of God's grace.***

Therefore it is decreed by God that, with the law ceasing, the grace of God should require faith alone for salvation.

Romans 4:6a ***Just as David also says.***

Paul reinforces this very point with the example of the prophet:

Romans 4:6b ***the blessedness of the person to whom God credits righteousness without works.***

He calls blessed those for whom God has ordained this, that without labor and any observance, they are justified before God by faith alone. Therefore, he proclaims the blessedness of the time in which Christ was born, as the Lord himself says: Many

righteous people and prophets have desired to see what you see, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it (Matt. 13:13).

> **<u>Romans 4:7-8</u>** ***Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not charged for sin*** (Ps. 31:1 etc.).

Clearly, *blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered* without any labor or work, with no works of penance required of them, except only that they believe. *Blessed too is this man to whom the Lord has not charged sin*. To forgive, to cover, and not to charge are one and the same in principle and meaning; for all are obtained and given in one and the same way.

However, some think there is a threefold reasoning in these sayings, because the prophet used different words, and because he passes from the plural number to the singular. For when the Word of God, in its abundance of grace, wishes to count the various names of sin through the terms for offenses, he speaks more broadly; yet the words are of one and the same form and meaning, since when he covers, he forgives; and when he forgives, he does not charge. He speaks at length in praise of the grace of God, so that he may magnify that grace. For he established three degrees on account of the diversity of offenses: the first degree is iniquity or wickedness, when the Creator is not acknowledged; the second is in works of grave sins; and the third, in lesser sins; yet all of these are blotted out in baptism. By these three degrees he signified the whole body of sin.

How, however, can this apply to the person of those who do penance, when he says: Blessed are those whose sins are covered; since it is evident that penitents obtain the forgiveness of sins by labor and weeping? Or how does that which he says agree with martyrdom: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not charged

for sin; since we know that the glory of martyrdom is obtained through sufferings and afflictions?

But the prophet, foreseeing the blessed time in the coming of the Savior, calls blessed those whose sins are forgiven, covered, and not charged to them without labor or any work, through the washing. Yet the Apostle, on account of the fullness of times, and because there is more grace in the apostles than there was in the prophets, proclaims greater things which we obtain from the gift of baptism; for he professes that we not only receive the forgiveness of sins, but are justified and made sons of God; so that this blessedness may have perfect security and glory.

Romans 4:9a ***So then, does this blessedness remain only in circumcision, or also in uncircumcision?***

That is, has this blessedness of Abraham been granted only to his circumcised children, or also to those who are uncircumcised? For if, at that time, the nations were not forbidden to come to the law and the promise of Abraham, how could it be that, in the time of Christ, those coming to grace would be forbidden, when God has fully stirred us up by grace?

Romans 4:9b ***For we say, this is, if we speak according to the meaning of the law, that faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.***

Paul begins from the origin, so as to shut out every avoidance of splitting hairs; for one who is excluded from the starting point has nothing from which to begin raising a question.

> **<u>Romans 4:10-11</u>** ***How then was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith which he had while in uncircumcision, so that he might be the father of all who believe while in uncircumcision, that righteousness might also be reckoned to them*** (Gen. 17:10–11).

Abraham, while he was in uncircumcision, believed God. What did he believe? That he would have offspring, that is, a son, in whom all nations would be justified through faith in uncircumcision, just as Abraham himself was justified. For he received circumcision as a sign of the righteousness of faith: believing that he would have a son, he received a sign of this thing he believed, so that, because he was justified by believing, it might be evident. Therefore circumcision itself has no dignity, but is only a sign. The sons of Abraham received this sign so that they might be known as his sons, he who, believing God, had received this sign; that they might be imitators of their father's faith and believe in Jesus, who was promised to Abraham, of whom Isaac was born as a figure. For it is not in Isaac that all nations are blessed, but in Christ: "For there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), says the Apostle Peter.

> **<u>Romans 4:12</u>** ***And let him be the father of circumcision not only of those who are from the circumcision, but also of those who follow in the footsteps of the faith that is in the foreskin of our father Abraham.***

Paul says this because, by believing, Abraham was first made the father of circumcision, but of the heart, not only of those who are from his lineage, but also of those from the nations who likewise

believe. For according to the flesh he is the father of the Jews, but according to faith he is the father of all who believe.

Romans 4:13 ***For the promise made to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.***

It is clear that neither had the Law yet been given, nor was circumcision already in place, when the promise was already made to Abraham as he believed, and to his seed, which is Christ, who would wash away the sins of men. Therefore John the Baptist says: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:19). Therefore he did not become heir of the world by reason of the merit of an observed law, but by faith. Now the heir of the world is the heir of the land, which he obtained in his children; but Christ is heir of the nations, as David sings: And I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession (Ps. 14:8); for we shall die and live with him.

Romans 4:14a ***For if those who are from the Law are heirs,***

that is, if those who are from the Law or under the Law are heirs by the Law,

Romans 4:14b ***faith has been nullified, the promise abolished.***

It is clear that if the inheritance is from the Law, the promise that was made to Abraham on the basis of faith becomes void. But the promise was not made through the Law; rather, the inheritance is

through the righteousness of faith. For the Apostle shows what evil there is in hoping for an inheritance from the Law.

Romans 4:15a ***For the law produces wrath.***

To show completely that a person cannot be justified by the law before God, nor could the promise have been made through the law, Paul says: *The law produces wrath*; for it was given for this purpose, that it might make transgressors guilty. Faith, however, is the gift of God's mercy, so that those who have been made guilty through the law may obtain pardon; therefore faith produces joy. Nor does he speak against the law, but he sets faith before it; because those who could not be saved through the law are saved by the grace of God through faith. Therefore the law is not wrath, but it produces wrath for the sinner, that is, punishment; since it does not forgive, but avenges. For punishment is generated by wrath, and wrath arises from sin; and therefore he wants the law to be set aside, so that one may flee to faith, which forgives sins, in order to save.

Romans 4:15b ***For where there is no law, there is no transgression.***

Paul says this because, once the guilty are removed from the power of the law and pardon is given, there is no transgression; for those who through transgression of the law had been sinners are justified. For the law of deeds ceases, that is, the observance of Sabbaths, new moons, circumcision, distinction of foods, observance concerning a dead animal, or the blood of a weasel.

Romans 4:16a ***Therefore, it is from faith, so that according to grace the promise may be firm for every seed.***

The promise cannot be firm for every seed, that is, for every human being from every nation, unless it is from faith; because the origin of the promise is from faith, not from the law; for those who are under the law are guilty: but a promise cannot be given to the guilty; and so they must first be purified through faith, so that they may become worthy to be called children of God, and the promise may be firm. For if they call themselves children of God while they are guilty, that is, under the law, it is not firm; because the children of God are free from sin. If therefore those who are under the law must be delivered from under the law, so that they may merit receiving the promise, how much more those who are not under the law! It is therefore not advisable for a person to put himself under the law, as though he could more quickly find a remedy for his wound.

Romans 4:16b ***Not only to him who is of the law, but also to him who is of the faith of Abraham.***

This is what he said above: To *every seed*, both to the Jews, who of course came from the law, and to the Gentiles, who follow the faith of Abraham, which he had as a Gentile, so that he might be righteous. For Abraham believed without the law, and therefore is more closely joined to the Gentiles, so that *the promise may be firm* for them, to those who believe in Him in whom he himself believed.

Romans 4:17a ***Who is the father of us all, as it is written: "For I have made you the father of many nations"*** (Gen. 17:4).

By the example from the Law he confirms that Abraham is the father of all, but of those who believe; and therefore that the promise is firm, if for the sake of faith one withdraws from the

Law, because the promise of the kingdom of heaven is assigned to the righteous, not to sinners. And those who are under the Law are under sin, because all have sinned, and it is not possible for anyone both to be under the Law and to obtain grace, as he also says to the Galatians: "You are severed from Christ, you who seek to be justified in the Law; you have fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Romans 4:16b ***Before him in whom you have believed, God.***

To teach that there is one God of all, he speaks to the Gentiles, saying that Abraham believed in God himself and was justified before him in whom the nations also believe, that they too may be justified, so that there may be no difference between Jew and Greek in faith; for with circumcision and uncircumcision removed, they become one in Christ; because Abraham also believed while uncircumcised and was justified.

Romans 4:16c ***Who gives life to the dead and calls into being the things that do not exist as though they did.***

By this statement he invites the nations to the faith of Abraham; because when he was in uncircumcision, believing God, whose faith is now proclaimed in Christ, he was given life together with his wife. For when they were of worn-out age, the elderly were renewed in strength, so that he did not doubt that he would have a son by Sarah, whom he knew to be barren, and in whom the flow of feminine nature had already ceased; so that through these events they should not concern themselves either with uncircumcision or circumcision, and should be ready in regard to faith, secure because they believe in him who gives life to the dead, and that no other has this power; and when he wills that what does not exist should come to be, by his will it immediately stands

forth. Therefore Abraham, when he was not yet a father, was called the father of many nations and believed, confident in the power of God. And in order that it might be believed that the Father of Christ is the same God in whom Abraham believed, such a sign was given in Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:13), when the promise was restored in the world at the coming of Christ, like the sign that had been given in Abraham and Sarah when the promise was sealed; so that in a similar way bodies made lifeless by old age should generate the holy John, just as Isaac had been born.

Romans 4:18a ***Who against hope believed in hope*** (Gen. 15:5).

It is clear that when Abraham had no hope of producing offspring, he believed God, maintaining faith against hope that he would generate, but knowing that God can do all things.

Romans 4:18b ***That he might become the father of many nations, according to what was said: So shall your seed be*** (Gen. 15:5).

This is in Genesis; for when He showed him the stars of heaven, He said: *So shall your seed be*, and by believing this he was justified. For he believed what seems impossible to the world, since it does not fall within the order of nature that old men can produce children, and that their offspring can be multiplied in such abundance that it cannot be counted. Therefore faith is precious, because it believes that what one knows or sees will be surpassed in the future: with this hope he consoles himself, because it is God who promises; and it is fitting that more be thought of Him than human weakness can comprehend.

<u>Romans 4:19-22</u> ***And he was not weakened in faith: nor did he consider his own body already dead, since he was nearly a hundred years old, and the dead womb of Sarah. In the promise of God, however, he did not hesitate in unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God: being certain that what He had promised, He is able also to perform; and therefore it was reckoned to him as righteousness.***

This is what Abraham is praised for as worthy of praise; because, though he knew himself to be unable, he strengthened his weakness by faith, so that he might believe himself able through God to do what he knew could not be done by the decrees of the world. Therefore great is the merit with God of the one who, against his own knowledge, believed God, not doubting that He could, as being God, do what he knows, according to the reasoning of the world, cannot be done. For he holds as certain that God is beyond the reasoning of the world; for no one can be said to be limited within that which he created. Therefore such a one is to be rewarded by God, because he attributes more to his Maker than he himself understands. This indeed would be of no value, if all felt alike: but by the unbelief of many, the faith of believers is commended before God. He therefore exhorts the nations to this firmness of faith, that they may receive the promise and grace of God without any uncertainty, confident in the example of Abraham, because praise increases for the believer if what is incredible and seems foolish to the world is believed; for the more impossible what is believed is thought to be, the more honorable the believer will be: and yet it would truly be foolish to believe this, if it were said to happen without God. And therefore the faith of Abraham is so much more praiseworthy than the faith of others; because it was not drawn by any wonders of signs. But since the world is governed by a fixed law and power, and is ruled in a

definite manner by God, while men, because of the love of the flesh and their zeal for reasoning, have neglected God, the Maker of this work; God, in order to remove error and to show Himself Lord of all, willed that it should be proclaimed that He can do and has done what is impossible for the world; so that those who believe this, being separated from those who, puffed up by the reasoning of the world, have neglected God, may be saved, having been made subjects of God's dominion.

> **<u>Romans 4:23-25</u>** ***But it was not written only for him alone, that it was reckoned to him for righteousness*** (Gen. 15:4); ***but also for us, to whom it will be reckoned, if we believe in him who raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification.***

In Abraham he declares a pattern given to Jews and Gentiles, so that by his example we may believe in God, and in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, and righteousness may be reckoned to us. Though what is believed now differs, faith nonetheless has one and the same gift. This, then, we obtain by what we believe: for by believing that Christ is the Son of God, we are adopted by God as sons; for he could grant nothing greater to believers than that they should be called sons of God, the faithless having been disowned. For we are called sons of God, but they are not even worthy to be called servants. For in his infinite magnificence God has granted this to those who love him, something worthy of his own majesty, not something that men deserve; because in a gift the greatness of the giver is considered far more than that of the recipient, and from this he gains greater praise, when through Christ he bestows great gifts upon little ones; Christ who, for our sake, allowed himself to be put to death, so that, pardon having been given, he might rescue us from the second death, that is, from the punishment of hell

[*inferni*]; and he rose again, so that through the joy of the triumph over conquered death he might grant us the grace of justification, that we might be worthy to be called sons of God. For before the Passion, those who were baptized received only the remission of those sins for whose sake Satan, in his zeal, put the Savior to death; but after the Resurrection, both those who were baptized earlier and those who were baptized later were all justified through the given pattern of faith in the Trinity, and by receiving the Holy Spirit, who is the sign of believers that they are sons of God. And in order that it might profit us as the fullness of justification, by rising he gave authority to his own precepts; so that, by matching their merits, we may increase ourselves through those by which, having obtained glory, we may appear radiant in the kingdom of God, with this confidence by which, having been justified, we cannot be held by death. For through the Passion of the Savior, death was overcome, which formerly, by reason of sin, held dominion, and it does not dare to hold those justified by him.

Chapter 5

Romans 5:1 ***Therefore, being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

It is faith, not the law, that makes us have peace with God; for it reconciles us to God by removing the sins that had made us his enemies. And since the Lord Jesus is the minister of this grace, through him we have been made at peace with God. For faith is greater than the law: the law is ours, but faith is God's; and the law concerns present discipline, whereas faith concerns eternal salvation. But whoever does not think about Christ as he ought will not be able to attain the rewards of faith, because he does not hold to the truth of faith.

Romans 5:2 ***Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we glory in the hope of the glory of the children of God.***

It is evident that through Christ we have entry to the grace of God; for he is the mediator of God and men, who, raising us up by his teaching, has caused us to hope for the gift of God's grace, standing in faith in him. We stand, therefore, because previously we lay low; but believing, we have been raised up, rejoicing in the hope of the brightness which God has promised to us.

Romans 5:3a ***Not only this, but we also glory in our tribulations.***

Since through tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21), therefore he teaches that we must also glory in them. When tribulation is added to hope, it increases the reward; for tribulation is the proof of steadfast hope, bearing witness toward the crown. Therefore the Lord says: Blessed are you when they persecute you and speak all manner of evil against you because of the righteousness of God. Rejoice and be glad; for behold, your reward is abundant in heaven (Matt. 5:11). For to despise present things, and those that bring delight, and not to yield under pressure because of the hope of future things, is of great merit before God. Therefore we must glory in tribulations, because a person believes he will receive so much the more, the stronger he has shown himself in tribulation.

Romans 5:3b ***Knowing that tribulation works patience.***

This is what it means *that tribulation works patience*: if tribulation itself does not suffer any movement of weakness or doubt.

Romans 5:4a ***Patience, however, brings about proving.***

It is clear that patience, if it is of the kind we have described, will appear as firm proof.

Romans 5:4b ***Proof, however, brings about hope.***

Hope in the one who appears proven is not said without reason; for he will be known as worthy, about to receive his reward in the kingdom of God.

Romans 5:5 ***But hope does not put us to shame; because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.***

Hope is not mistaken, even while we are judged by the faithless as foolish and dull, for believing things worldly reason cannot grasp; for we have as a pledge of God's love within us *the Holy Spirit given to us*. The Holy Spirit, given to the apostles and to us, proves that the promise of God is trustworthy, since he granted that the unlearned should speak in various languages with interpretations to confirm hope, and therefore praise the love of God within us (Acts 2:4); so that, because it is impossible for those who are dear to be deceived, he might make us secure concerning the promise: for it is God who has promised; and he has promised it to those whom he wills to have as his beloved. For human words are not able to assert the reason of our faith unless supported by the testimony of virtues, which, though silent, cry out, and are approved as rational to the confusion of the wise of this world: who, with boldness of speech, fight with earthly weapons against heavenly things, and with carnal weapons against spiritual things, and are not ashamed to call themselves wise. For just as the origin

of a foreigner, a man of no repute, is doubtful in a strange land; so too the truth of our faith dwells as a stranger upon the earth: and because its nature cannot be explained in words, it is praised by the testimony of virtue, which is the greater thing.

<u>Romans 5:6-7</u> ***For why indeed did Christ, while we were still sinners, at the appointed time die for the ungodly? For scarcely does anyone die for a righteous person; for a good person perhaps someone might dare to die.***

If for unbelievers and those hostile to God Christ gave himself over to death for a time, for he died for a time, because on the third day he rose again, how much more, when we believe in him, will he fortify us with his help? For this is why he died for us: that he might obtain both life and glory for us. Therefore, if he died for his enemies, it must be understood how much more he does for his friends. Among human beings, that is, according to time, he seemed to die; for he, in the realm of the dead, was judging irreverent and wicked spirits for the salvation of souls. There are times in the world, where the sun rises and sets, and the moon increases and decreases, and day and night do not remain in their state; for whatever is subject to time and age is always changeable. To this time, then, Christ died, when he departed from the body. But where there is neither time nor age, there he is found not only alive, but also victorious. From this he wished to praise the Savior's love toward us, when he says: "*Scarcely does anyone die for a righteous person;* but Christ died *for the ungodly*." For if scarcely anyone dies for a righteous person, how can it be that someone dies for the ungodly? And if for a single good person someone perhaps dares to die, or perhaps does not dare, because he indicates that both possibilities are difficult; how can it be thought that someone would dare to die for the wickedness of many? For even if someone, moved by a certain compassion or

the attraction of his good works, perhaps dares to die for a righteous or good person, in the case of the ungodly there is not only nothing to persuade one to die, but nothing even to move one to tears. But Christ died for the sins of the people, and not yet for his own, so that he might make all things credible which the world doubts. Therefore he made two degrees, that of the righteous and that of the good: for although the righteous person is also to be called good, still he set forth the categories themselves, indicating the righteous by practice, but the good by nature, one who is called innocent in his simplicity. Therefore, although, as far as this passage is concerned, the righteous is of greater merit than the good, yet he says: "*For a good person, perhaps someone might dare to die*"; so that, because the cause of innocence is more pitiable, he suggests that for this someone might perhaps be compelled. Indeed parents wish to die for good children, not to say wives for good husbands. For if we wish to set up a comparison between the good and the righteous, sometimes we discover that the righteous is better, sometimes that the good is to be preferred. For if according to God's law someone who is righteous is better than the good, it is better than that kind of good person who has not yet labored with himself to increase his good qualities; for by training, the righteous will improve the goodness of his nature. But if someone is righteous according to the world, the good person is preferred to him because of innocence, since such righteousness is not without severity. Therefore every nature is good, while righteousness according to God's law is a fruit fitting to nature; and so righteousness is goodness, where the righteous are always also called good. Yet the good are not always righteous, because they are not called good on account of works, but on account of innocence; for righteousness is perfect goodness when it carries out, in deed, the good proper to its nature.

Romans 5:8 ***But God praises His love in us.***

Therefore He praises His love, while He is still generous toward His enemies and sends One who will save them, even though they certainly do not deserve it.

> **<u>Romans 5:9</u>** ***For if, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us, much more now, being justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him.***

Paul says this because, if God allowed his Son to be put to death for sinners, what will he do for the justified, except keep them from wrath, that is, make them safe from the Devil's deceit, so that they may be secure on the day of judgment, when vengeance begins to lay waste the faithless? For since the goodness of God wills that none should perish, he has granted a most worthy death, so that, to those who recognize God's grace toward them, he might add honor and glory, and upon the ungrateful heap up punishment. The ungrateful are those who, when God calls, refuse, denying God's grace so that they remain fixed in their error and wickedness.

> **<u>Romans 5:10</u>** ***For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.***

It is clear that if, in order to reconcile us to Himself, God handed over His Son to death, how much more, now that we are reconciled, will He save us by His life? For He cannot fail to love His friends, He who benefits His enemies. If the death of the Savior helped us while we were still ungodly, how much more will His life justify us, now that He has risen from the dead? For just as His death has snatched us from the Devil, so His life will deliver us from the day of God's judgment.

Romans 5:11 ***Not only this, but we also glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.***

Paul teaches not only that thanks are to be given to God for the salvation and safety received, but also that we are to glory in God through Christ Jesus, who has agreed that we, once ungodly and enemies, should be called his friends; so that, having obtained all benefits through Christ, we may rejoice: and because through him we have come to know God, as we glory in him, we may render to him honor equal to God the Father, he himself bearing suitable witness and proclaiming: "That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father" (Jn. 5:23). Therefore, after the providence of God the Father and the gift which he gave through Christ, to make the person of the Son pleasing to us, since through the one Christ we have been redeemed by the one God the Father, he added:

Romans 5:12 ***Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin, death; so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned in him.***

Since above Paul has shown the grace of God given through Christ according to the order of truth, he now sets forth the very order of the one God the Father, through the one Christ His Son, so that, because Adam, one, that is, Eve, for she too is Adam, sinned in all, so one Christ, the Son of God, conquered sin in all. And because he has shown the purpose of God's grace toward the human race, he begins from Adam to show the very beginnings of sin, because he was the first who sinned, so that he might teach that the providence of the one God has restored, through one, what through one had fallen and been drawn into death. This, then, is the one through whom we are saved; to him, by God the Father's

will, that reverence is given which we owe to the Father Himself. For the same one says in another place: He who serves Christ in these things pleases God (Rom. 14:18); though it is written: The Lord your God you shall adore, and Him only shall you serve (Deut. 6:13). If, therefore, he says that only God is to be served, and yet commands that Christ be served, Christ is in the unity of God, and is neither inferior nor another God; since, when the Law says that only God is to be served, it is proclaimed that one who serves Christ together with God is pleasing to God. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death, so also through one Christ there came the condemnation and death of sin, granting eternal life, as he explains below.

In whom, that is, in Adam, *all have sinned*. Paul therefore said "in whom," though he is speaking of the woman, because he did not refer it to the individual, but to the race. Therefore it is clear that in Adam all sinned as though in the lump; for he himself, having been corrupted by sin, all whom he begot were born under sin. From him, then, all are sinners, because from him himself we all derive; for he lost the favor of God when he transgressed, becoming unworthy to eat of the tree of life, so that he should die. Now death is the termination of the body, when the soul is separated from the body. There is also another death, which is called the second, in Gehenna, which we do not suffer by Adam's sin, but, on the occasion of it, is acquired by our own sins: from this the good are free, only that they were in hell [*inferno*], but in the upper part, as if in a place of liberty, since they could not ascend to heaven; for they were held by the sentence given in Adam, which handwriting in the decrees was blotted out by the death of Christ (Col. 2:14). Now the sentence of the decree was that the body of one man should be dissolved upon the earth, while his soul, held by the bonds of hell [*infernī*], should suffer destruction.

<u>Romans 5:13</u> ***For until the Law, sin was in this world; but sin was not charged when there was no Law.***

Paul says that in Adam all sinned, as I mentioned above, and that until the Law was given sin was not charged; for people thought they could sin against God with freedom, though not against other people. For the natural law had not been completely numbed; they were not ignorant that what they did not want to suffer, they should not do to others. Indeed, sin was so far from unknown among humans that when Jacob, having idols, was searched by his father-in-law Laban, he judged that whoever was found with the stolen goods was worthy of death (Gen. 31:30ff.); and Joseph, though falsely accused, was nevertheless shut up in prison as though guilty (Gen. 39:20); and Pharaoh's baker and cupbearer likewise suffered on account of their offence (Gen. 40:3); and Moses, after killing the Egyptian, was frightened by the law (Exod. 2:12). How, then, was sin not charged when there was no Law? Or how was it punished, unless the Law was known?

The natural law always exists, nor was it ever entirely unknown; but it was thought to have authority only for a time, and not to make people guilty before God. For it was unknown that God would judge the human race, and therefore sin was not charged, as though sin were not known to God, while they asserted that God was unconcerned. But when the Law was given through Moses, it was made clear that God cares about human affairs, and that those who do evil will not go unpunished, whatever the cause by which they escape for the present. For certainly, if among themselves, under the teaching of justice or nature, they did not consider sins unavenged, how much more should they not have been ignorant that God, whom they knew as the maker of the world, would require these things? Since Sodom and Gomorrah were sentenced to perish by fire (Gen. 19:24), which had indeed been covered over by forgetfulness; Moses, however, in writing, made it clear, to strengthen the belief that God would be judge. But when, passing

over God, they began to adopt figments in honor of God, having become depraved in mind, they trampled on part of the natural law, which is the first part. For the natural law has three parts, the first of which is this: that the Creator, once recognized, should be honored, and that his glory and majesty should not be attributed to any of the creatures. The second part is moral, that is, that one should live well, governed by modesty; for it is fitting for a human being who has knowledge of the Creator to restrain his life by law, lest that knowledge be rendered futile. The third part is instructive, that the knowledge of God the Creator and the example of moral conduct be handed on to others, so that they may learn how merit is placed before the Creator. This is true and Christian wisdom.

Romans 5:14a ***But death reigned from Adam until Moses.***

For sin was not charged before the Law was given through Moses, as I have said; by the very liberty of this violation death reigned, knowing that those men were devoted to it. Therefore death reigned with the security of its dominion both over those who escaped for a time, and over those who even here paid the penalties for their evil deeds. For it saw that all were its own; for "whoever commits sin is the servant of sin" (Jn. 8:34). Thinking they could yield with freedom, they sinned all the more, especially in those sins to which they were more inclined, which the world fostered as though they were lawful. Over this Satan rejoiced, being confident that, because of Adam's case, man left by God was in his possession.

Romans 5:14b So then death reigned over those ***who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression***,

who is a pattern of the future; this we shall show in what follows. Therefore it is clear that death did not reign over all, because not

all sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, that is, not all sinned by despising God. And who are they who sinned by despising God, if not those who, neglecting the Creator, served the creature, setting up gods for themselves to worship, to the injury of God? For this reason the Devil rejoiced in such men, because he saw that they had become his imitators. For both Terah (Jos. 24:2), the father of Abraham, and Nahor and Laban (Gen. 31:19, 31:30) claimed their own gods for themselves. And Adam's sin is not far from idolatry; for he transgressed, thinking that as a man he would become God. He judged that what the Devil suggested would benefit him more than what God commanded, setting the Devil in the place of God; and therefore he became subject to the Devil. In like manner these men, having transgressed against God, while they serve the creature, sin in a similar way, though not in the same way; for a likeness usually has some difference. Nor indeed can it be said that those who received the command not to eat of the tree, as Adam did (Gen. 2:16), are the same as those who sinned, who did not transgress a positive command of God, but the law of nature. Whoever understood, whether by transmission or by natural indication, and worshiped God, imparting to no one else the honor of His name and majesty, if such a one sinned, since it is impossible not to sin, he sinned under God, not against God, whom he felt to be his Judge; and therefore in such a man death did not reign. But, as I said, it reigned over those who, under the guise of idols, served the Devil. Because the Law had not been decreed with authority, they were unable to apprehend God as Judge. For the greater part of the world did not know that God would be Judge; but the very few in whom death did not reign, in those in whom it did reign, after this death, which is called the first, are excepted for the second, unto future punishment and destruction. But in those in whom it did not reign, because they did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression, they were kept in hope for the coming of the Savior into freedom; as we read of Abraham, that although he was in hell [*inferos*], he was

nevertheless separated by a great interval, so that there was an immense chasm between the righteous and the sinners (Luke 16:26). If there was an immense chasm between the righteous and the sinners, how much greater between the godless, so that the righteous might have refreshment, and the sinners torment, and the wicked burning; so that before the judgment it might not be hidden what each one was worthy of. And therefore death reigned over them, because it saw that the works of its subtlety had advanced them to punishment as though they were its enemies. For it was not hidden from it that man was made in the world for this purpose, that he might proclaim the rule of the one God, which Satan had transgressed.

And if in the Greek text it is not stated so carefully, it is written therefore: that death also reigned over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression. Here it seems to embrace everything, so that, since death, that is, termination, came about through the envy of the Devil, he says that death reigned even over those who did not sin, for they die, which is what Satan desires. If this were true, it should not have been said: "*Death reigned from Adam until Moses*," if from the beginning until the end it reigns over all. Or perhaps he made stages, so that it reigned from Adam until Moses, and from Moses until Christ, and from Christ until the end; but to what purpose would such a way of speaking serve, since he is not found to have spoken so? For he said: "From Adam death reigned until Moses," because the Law had not yet been revealed, so that, once the Law was given, they might live under its authority, knowing what to avoid lest death should reign over them. Therefore, can it be said that death reigned over the man who, before the Law, by nature's guidance, observed what the Law later commanded? Consider what is written about this: "Sin," he says, "was not charged when there was no Law"; and he added: "But death reigned from Adam until Moses", of course in that time when there was no Law; and it is fitting that, because death

reigned before the Law was given, it should be said to have reigned over those who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, as we mentioned above. For just as, after the Law was given, death reigned over those who served idols or fornication, despising the lawgiver, so also before the Law it did not by any means reign over those who anticipated the sense of the Law, honoring its Author. For it is said to have reigned because knowledge of the one God had vanished from the earth. Indeed, the Law began in this way: "I am," he says, "the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods besides me; and you shall not make for yourself an idol nor any likeness" (Exod. 20:2). Therefore the Law was given so that death might not reign; that, sins of former times being abolished, the human race might obey the one God. Therefore in another place the same Apostle says: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it" (Rom. 6:12). By this statement he shows that even now death reigns, if the Law is despised. For what is the reign of death, if not when its will is done, while it commands, to the destruction of the one who obeys, whose ruling will is the very head of idolatry?

And yet it is prescribed to us from the Greek manuscripts as if they did not differ among themselves, which is caused by the zeal of conflict. For since a person cannot use his own authority in order to win, he falsifies the words of the law, so that he may assert his own meaning as though it were the words of the law, and it appears that not reason but authority lays down the rule. Moreover, it is well known that certain ancient Latin manuscripts were translated from old Greek ones, which the simplicity of earlier times has preserved and attests as uncorrupted. But after minds departed from unity and, with heretics causing disturbances, began to be racked by disputes, many things were altered according to human understanding, so that what seemed right to man should be contained in the text; where even the Greeks themselves have

different manuscripts. I judge this to be true, since reason, history, and authority all bear it out: for even today, in Latin manuscripts that are criticized, they are found set down as in the writings of the ancients, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Cyprian.

So then, the kingdom of death first began to be destroyed in Judea, because God is known in Judea (Ps. 75:2); but now it is destroyed day by day among all nations, while to a great extent the children of the Devil become children of God. And therefore death did not reign over all, but over those who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, as I mentioned above. Now Adam is the type of the one to come for this reason: because God had already then decreed in mystery to correct through the one Christ what had been sin through the one Adam, as it is said in the Apocalypse of John the Apostle: "The Lamb," he says, "who was slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Finally, he added:

Romans 5:15a ***But the gift is not like the trespass.***

For when Paul said that the form of the one Christ is the one Adam, he did this so that the cause of Adam should not be thought to be of the same kind as that of Christ. Therefore he says: *But the gift is not like the trespass*; because Adam is a figure of Christ only in this respect, that as one sinned, so one corrected it.

Romans 5:15b ***For if by the trespass of one many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift in the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to many.***

That is, if by the trespass of one many died by imitating his transgression, much more did the grace of God and the gift overflow to many who flee to him. For more obtain grace than died by Adam's trespass. From this it is clear that he did not mean

this death which is common to all; because all without exception die, and yet not all obtain grace. Nor is it said that death reigned over all, but over those who died through Adam's trespass, those whom he says sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression. These are those whom he calls "*many dead through the trespass of one*," but the grace of God overflowed to more; because in those who are said to have died by Adam's trespass, sinning in like manner, and in those who did not sin in this likeness of Adam's transgression, the grace of God overflowed. And though by the father's sin, according to God's judgment, they were in the underworld (*inferos*), the grace of God overflowed in the descent of the Savior, granting pardon to all, and, with triumph, lifting them up into heaven. (1 Peter 3:18-20)

Romans 5:16 ***And not as with the one sin, so also is the gift: for the judgment indeed came from one unto condemnation, but the gift from many offenses unto justification.***

It is clearly different, because by the one sin of Adam those who sinned in the likeness of his transgression were condemned; but the grace of God through Christ has justified human beings not from one offense, but from many, by granting them the remission of sins. This is spoken to the greatness of the mercy of God and of Christ; so that, although through Adam's offense many are held by the second death in the lower hell (*inferno*), yet the gift of God's grace, when it would have been just for them to be punished, not only pardons them, but justifies them.

Romans 5:17 ***For if by the offense of one man death reigned through one, much more shall those who receive***

the abundance of grace and of the gift and of righteousness reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.

It must be noted that there is one and the same meaning, and that in no way does it differ: for Paul says that death has reigned, not that it is reigning; because those who understood God's judgment through the Law have been lifted out from under its dominion. But it did reign, because without the revealing of the Law, the fear of God was not upon the earth. The earlier sense, therefore, is that because death reigned from Adam to Moses over those who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, much more does grace reign, in the abundance of God's gift, unto life through the one Jesus Christ. For if death reigned, why should not grace reign much more, which justifies far more people than those in whom death reigned? How much more must grace be believed to reign, which bestows life through Christ?

Romans 5:18 ***Therefore, just as through the transgression of one man condemnation came upon all men, so also through the righteousness of one man justification of life came upon all men:***

That is, just as through the transgression of one man all deserved condemnation by sinning in like manner, so also in the righteousness of one man all who believe will be justified. But if some think that this condemnation is universal, in the same way they will take the justification to be universal. Yet this is not true, because not all believe.

<u>Romans 5:19</u> ***For just as through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one man many will be made righteous.***

Those whom Paul previously called "all," he here designates as "*many*"; for more people followed Adam's offense by transgression, but not all; and many will be made righteous through faith in Christ, but not all. Therefore death did not reign over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression.

<u>Romans 5:20a</u> ***But the Law came in so that the offense might increase.***

One might say conversely: Therefore the Law ought not to have been given, lest sins grow; for if before the Law there was less sin, there was no need of the Law. The Law was indeed necessary, so that it might show that sins are counted before God, which were believed to be committed with immunity; so that thereafter people would know what they ought to avoid. Therefore the prophet Isaiah says: "The Law," he says, "was given as a help" (Isa. 8:20); because certain seeds of justice are in some manner implanted in nature itself, the Law was added so that, by its authority and teaching, the natural disposition might advance to produce the fruit of righteousness. For just as birth perishes unless it has nourishment by which, being sustained, it may grow, so also the natural disposition toward justice, unless it has something to look up to and venerate, does not easily flourish, but falls sick and yields to sins when they come. For by the habit of sinning it is pressed down so that it does not grow into fruit, and thereby it is extinguished. Therefore the Law was providentially given as a help, as the prophet bears witness; but the people, following their old habit, multiplied sins. For by practice they began to sin more than they had sinned before; and therefore it came to pass that, when the Law was given, sins were not diminished but increased.

The Apostle shows what resulted from the giving of the Law, not what the Law itself did. But how was it by fault of the Law that sins increased, when the Law threatened punishment so that people might not sin; and yet it is said to have come in so that sin might abound? It is true, because it entered, as it were, as something that would be helpful, and with humility; but afterwards it began to rule over those to whom it had commanded not to sin, and they did sin. For the Law began to reveal the abundance of sins, since the very things it had forbidden were done more than they had been done before. Therefore, in this way the Law was given so that the offense might increase; for as the Apostle praises faith, through which sins are indeed wiped out, he said that the Law caused sin to abound, as I said above; because it was not given so that sins might be abolished, but so that they might abound: since it showed people to be sinners before the Law, and after the Law it held all guilty.

Romans 5:20b ***But where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more.***

It is clear that when *sin abounded, grace abounded all the more*: when the gift of God came from the promise and covered the sins of all, so that the Devil might grieve that through his envy he had accomplished nothing. For when the Law had been given for human benefit, the Devil worked to overturn it by persuading people to unlawful deeds, so that what had been given to be helpful would in fact work in the opposite way, since the commandments were despised, and from the Law there proceeded not benefit but judgment unto vengeance. Then the just and merciful God, in order to empty the glory of the Devil which he had sought from his triumph over man, decreed that His Son should come, who would forgive all sins, so that the joy arising from the gift of grace might be greater than the sorrow that had

arisen from sin. For the joy of God's gift also benefits those over whom Satan could not triumph; therefore grace abounded beyond the sin which Satan had prompted.

> **<u>Romans 5:21</u>** ***As sin reigned unto death, so also let grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Sin reigned as it saw its work in sinners advancing toward death, in which it gloried; in like manner *let grace also reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, so that just as, through Adam, sin began to reign, so also, through Christ, grace. And grace reigns through righteousness if, having received the forgiveness of sins, we follow after righteousness; so that, seeing that it has fruit in the good whom it has redeemed, grace may reign unto eternal life, knowing that we shall be eternal. Grace therefore abounds, because sin reigned for a time, but grace forever. For it is God's kingdom when grace reigns, just as it was the Devil's kingdom when sin reigned. Yet he refers everything to Christ, so that all the grace of God may be learned from Christ. He therefore answers according to the foregoing sense, saying: